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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title	Overview and Scrutiny Involvement in identifying priority areas for Savings
Meeting	Cabinet – 17th October 2013
Executive Portfolio	Resources
Author	Assistant Director, Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All

SUMMARY

The Cabinet considered a report entitled Facing the Future 2013 at its September meeting and made the following decisions:

- It approved the list of potential options for future service delivery and for them to be considered in respect of all the services currently delivered by the Council;
- Requested Scrutiny Chairmen to prepare proposals for a delivery review programme to be presented to October Cabinet for approval, to agree resourcing for that programme and a proposed governance structure, and
- Requested Scrutiny Panels to review all options in line with the programme and present their conclusions and recommendations to Cabinet.

This report outlines how the Review will work so that the process can be confirmed for commencement in the November cycle of meetings.

The Financial Forecast to 2019 report contained the following forecast of the savings required:

FORECAST SAVINGS REQUIREMENTS	BUDGET	MTP			
	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Targetted	1,377	1,852	2,050	2,090	2,090
Not yet identified	138	2,620	2,948	3,181	3,694

It is recognised that:

- The potential scale of savings required (£5.8M by 2018/19) is extreme, particularly when it was a major task to identify the first £2.1M contained in the Targetted Savings list contained in Financial Forecast to 2019 report.
- The urgency is unprecedented in that £4.5M is forecast to be needed by 2015/16 – just 17 months away – and larger savings typically require longer lead times for delivery. This is £2.6M on top of the £1.9M contained in the targeted list
- Even if the Government's draft financial settlement in December reduces the impact for 2015/16 this is only likely to be a temporary, albeit very welcome, respite.

Given the scale of the challenge, officer resources will be extremely stretched over the coming months to refine and deliver identified proposals and so Panels will focus on the most significant options for each service. There will be no time or resources available to deal with secondary items at this stage which will generally only be considered once the initial plan has taken shape and been confirmed as realistic – this may take many months.

The process will consider:

- **Service areas shared between the Panels.**

The Panels will review service building blocks (service areas) which are generally the area of responsibility of the managers reporting to Heads of Service. Exceptions are where one of these Managers has some quite discrete elements, particularly if these are of significant value. The allocation between Panels is based on each Panel having approximately the same number of service areas, focussed on particular Heads of Service/Executive Councillors Portfolio Holders to manage availability and have both customer facing and support services.

- **The information to be provided to the Panels**

A Template will be completed for each Service. It provides a range of information including:

- Statutory Duties (not optional powers)
- Service Standards and current performance
- Manpower including any vacancies
- Financial including historic spending

It expects comments to be provided on these aspects where significant and then gives a list of the areas highlighted in Facing the Future and requires the manager to highlight all those areas where they consider that there are significant opportunities.

These Templates will have been reviewed by COMT to ensure that there is adequate consistency and challenge together with a suggested priority order to reflect a mixture of potential value and difficulty of achievement i.e. big and easy comes first.

- **The Panels' Task**

It is envisaged that the manager of the service, their Head of Service, a member of COMT and the relevant Executive Councillor will attend Panel Meetings wherever possible.

The Panels' Task is to:

- Identify any options that they consider are **equally or more significant/practical** than those on the template.
- Consider whether there are any options they do not support.
- Consider the proposed priority order.

• **Workload**

The Panels have been provided with a completed form to enable Members to form an idea of the amount of work required to review each Template. It has been decided that each Panel will need two additional meetings in November and December to complete the process. With the exception of the Budget, all other not urgent items will be cleared from November and December Agendas to support this priority.

As requested by the Cabinet, the Panels have approved a programme of meetings – see Annex hereto. The process is based on undertaking all reviews in time to report back to January Cabinet. Cabinet will then, in the light of COMT's views on the overall resources available, determine an overall priority order for developing proposals.

It is envisaged that the Templates will be considered as a Part 2 item because discussion will consider areas of commercial confidentiality and staffing issues that would be subject to consultation.

RECOMMENDATION

That the delivery review programme is approved.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Financial Forecast to 2019
Facing the Future 2013

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ANNEXS

- A Facing the Future 2013
- B Targeted Savings Proposals
- C Proposed Building Blocks and allocation to Panels
- D Proposed Template