

Maidstone Borough Council

Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 6 November 2012

Budget Setting Update

Report of: Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny has an overarching role within the Overview and Scrutiny structure which includes responsibility for Budget scrutiny.
- 1.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Strategy 2013-14 is developed and informed in line with Government policy and guidance.
- 1.3 The Chairman felt it appropriate to receive a verbal update to aid the Committee's understanding of the financial challenges faced by the Council following recent Government decisions affecting Budget setting. This is to enable the Committee in its ongoing role of pre-decision scrutiny of the Budget.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To consider the verbal update from the Head of Finance and Customer Services, Paul Riley, on guidance and emerging policies from Central Government and the impact this will have on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget setting, making recommendations as appropriate.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Committee have sought to strengthen its understanding of the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy by appointing a Budget Working Group at the beginning of the 2012-13 Municipal Year. This was following a recommendation made in the Council as a Business? review report.
- 3.2 The Budget Working Group has met on two occasions to consider the Budget Strategy in more detail. However, the most recent changes impressed on Local Government from Central Government have significantly altered the information and outlook previously considered and negated its understanding thus far.
- 3.3 The Budget Working Group will continue to meet following this most recent update to the Committee and will report its findings and recommendations to the Committee at its meeting on 8 January

2013 to ensure this Committee has an informed input into the Budget Strategy, pre decision.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 4.1 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following Council priority:
 - 'Corporate and Customer Excellence.
- 4.2 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.