

*making our region more prosperous, sustainable and fairer,
helping our people and businesses to create and seize opportunities*

Combined County Authority Board		Agenda Item 9
Date	16 September 2024	
Report Title	Budget Setting Process 2025/26 and the MTFP	
Accountable EMCCA Board Member	Mayor Claire Ward	
Accountable Chief Officer	Mark Rogers, Interim Chief Executive	
Accountable Employee	Nick Bell, Interim Director of Finance & S73 Officer	
Report has been considered by	This report has been considered by the EMCCA Pre-Board process	
Key decision	No	
Public Report	Yes	
Voting Arrangements	By simple majority including the Mayor	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Combined County Authority is recommended to:

A To approve the proposed timetable and process for the budget setting for the 2025/26 financial year and the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2026/27 to 2029/30.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper provides Board with a draft timeline and process to set the budget for the 2025/26 financial year and the MTFP for 2026/27 to 2029/30 and seeks approval from the Board for the proposed timetable and process.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement for the Combined County Authority and the Mayor to set approved budgets each year and to do that in sufficient time to inform its constituent councils so that they can reflect necessary budget implications within their own approved budgets for the following financial year.
- 2.2 The budget setting timetable is attached at Appendix 1 and the main stages of the process are as follows:

Stage 1 – Preparation and consultation on process (mid-July 2024 to 19th September 2024)

- This process commenced in July and will continue until 19th September and is the stage that the Combined County Authority are currently in. It encompasses the development and consultation of the process to develop the Combined County Authority's first detailed budget for 2025/26 and MTFP for 2026/27 to 2029/30. Consultation on the proposed process has already taken place with the Constituent Council Chief Executives and Section 151 Officers. There will be a further opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&SC) to consider the process at its informal meeting on 19th September, as well as considering how O&SC will want to undertake scrutiny of the proposed budget in November.
- Alongside this consultation process, internal meetings will take place between Finance and all managers/budget holders across the Combined County Authority to carry out a review of their budgets and planned activities for 2025/26 and future years. These initial drafts will also be reviewed by each Executive Director and the Deputy Chief Executive.

Stage 2 – First draft of the budget and further consultation on draft budget position (Mid-September 2024 to early November 2024)

- During this stage further internal work is carried out to develop the MTFP and the first draft budget for 2025/26 is produced. Planned activities included in the budget at Stage 1 being reviewed by the Senior Leadership Team, consultation with the Constituent Council's Chief Executives and Section 151 Officers, and consultation with the District and Borough Council's Chief Executives and representatives. All Thematic Committees will be consulted throughout October to ensure they can input into the budget process.

Stage 3 – Draft Budget (28th November 2024 to 16th December 2024)

- The draft budget will be presented to O&SC on 28th November for budget scrutiny. If there are any proposed amendments following this budget scrutiny work then further consultation will be carried out with the Constituent Councils Chief Executives and Section 151 Officers if required. The draft budget will be presented to Board on 16th December.

Stage 4 – Public Consultation & Final Budget (17th December 2024 to 10th February 2025)

- Residents and businesses in the regional area, together with other key stakeholders will be consulted on the draft budget and the MTFP. This consultation will commence on 17th December and continues until 20th January. The results of the consultation will be included in the final budget and MTFP for presentation to Board on 10th February.

3. Background

- 3.1 The final budget will not be approved until the Board meeting in February 2025 for this first full budget cycle. Whilst opportunities have been included in the budget timetable to ensure that constituent Councils are given the opportunity to be consulted and engaged at regular stages throughout the budget setting process, in future years, consideration will be given to bring the date for the Board to approve the budget forward to the end of January to allow constituent councils more time to reflect the impact of any final approvals in their own budgets.

4. Appendices

- 4.1 Appendix 1 - Budget Setting Process

5. Implications

Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

- 5.2 Budget setting is a function of the EMCCA Board, and the procedure set out in this report enables EMCCA to conclude its budget setting process within appropriate timescales for consultation and approval. Accordingly, the decisions set out in this report are intra-vires.

Other Significant Implications

- 5.3 None identified.

Background Papers

- 5.4 N/A