

**REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting:	24 th February 2015
Subject:	Report from 'The Funding Challenge. Saving £75m from the Council's Budget' Challenge Panel.
Responsible Officer:	Alex Dewsnap Divisional Director, Partnership Development and Performance
Scrutiny Lead Member area:	Councillor Steve Wright: Policy Lead – Resources Councillor Adam Swersky: Performance Lead - Resources
Exempt:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Report from 'The Funding Challenge. Saving £75m from the Council's Budget' Challenge Panel.

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report accompanies the report from the Council Tax Support Scheme Challenge Panel. The report outlines the review's observations and findings with regard the council's budget-setting and associated processes.

Recommendations:

Councillors are recommended to:

- I. Consider the findings and recommendations of the Challenge Panel
- II. Refer the review's recommendations to cabinet for consideration

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

Within this current climate, where the Council is faced with the challenge of making £75million savings over three years, it is imperative that we as a Council make the best decisions for the residents of Harrow.

The Scrutiny Leadership Group decided to undertake a review of Harrow's budget-setting and associated (particularly consultation) processes. The Challenge Panel took place on the 14th January 2015 and the main aims were to:

- Review the budget setting process
- Understand how budget proposals have been derived
- Review resident and staff consultation methodologies and how responses inform the budget decision processes.
- Understand the long term impact and consequences of the proposed budget decisions.
- Review the way Overview & Scrutiny considers the budget.

The panel invited and heard evidence from Council officers, Portfolio Holders, the Voluntary and Community Sector Representatives and other local authorities and organisations that support them. Local voluntary sector organisations and council recognised trade unions were also invited to submit evidence or viewpoints in advance.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report. However, if the report's recommendations are accepted, the services considered will provide detail of any costs likely to be incurred.

Performance Issues

There are no specific performance issues associated with this report.

Equalities Implications

An EqlA was not carried out specifically for this report as the report includes no proposals for service change. Where changes result from the acceptance of this report's recommendations, these will be accompanied by an EqlA.

Council Priorities

This review relates to all four of the Corporate Priorities 2014/15, including:

- Making a difference for the most vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for families
- Making a difference for local businesses

Ward Councillors notified:

N/A

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Edward Smith, Policy officer. 0208 424 7602

Background Papers: 'The Funding Challenge. Saving £75m from the Council's Budget' Challenge Panel Scope.