



# Part 5D

## Budget Protocol – Information Gathering by Political Groups

## **PART 5D - BUDGET PROTOCOL - INFORMATION GATHERING BY POLITICAL GROUPS**

### **1. PREAMBLE**

- 1.1 As a general rule, financial information sought by any Member of the Council from either the Director of Finance or the Deputy Chief Executive or a Strategic Director/Managing Director will be copied to the respective Committee Chairs/Cabinet portfolio holder for their own information.
- 1.2 The only exception to this would be if the information was:
- a) of a personal nature;
  - b) was personal to a constituent but the Member had been authorised to receive information (usually Housing Benefits issues); or
  - c) the information related to the development of a budget strategy.

### **2. PROPOSED PROTOCOL - BUDGET STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.1 The Director of Finance as Chief Finance Officer must treat these requests on a confidential basis as set out in the professional advice from CIPFA.
- 2.2 This advice also applies to any qualified member of the Treasury Division staff representing him/her.
- 2.3 The Deputy Chief Executive/Strategic Directors/Managing Directors are not bound by this advice but it is proposed that any meetings arranged with political groups to establish information to support the budget process should be recorded with notes of the meeting copied to the Chief Executive only and the Director of Finance as well as the Members who attended the meeting.
- 2.4 Such meetings must have the respective Financial Adviser in attendance, together with any other departmental officer felt to be appropriate.
- 2.5 The Chief Executive will determine whether any or all of the discussion should be circulated to other groups.
- 2.6 Discussions between the Director of Finance and political groups will however remain confidential as will any subsequent information given, subject to consulting with the Chief Executive and/or Monitoring Officer on policy/legal issues.
- 2.7 To the extent that such discussions require consultation with other Chief Officers (for confirmation of questions on issues such as deliverability etc.), this will only be undertaken after agreement with the political group in question.

