

MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL – 6 MARCH 2025

AGENDA ITEM No. 8 – REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING FOR 2025/26

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The following amendment will be proposed by Councillor Jack Kellas and seconded by Councillor Sylvia Michael.

As outlined in Section 3 of the report, that the revenue estimates for 2025/26 and schedule of fees and charges, as submitted in the Council's Budget book be approved subject to the following changes as outlined below:

- 1.0 Council reduces the proposed increase in council tax from the maximum increase allowable of 2.99%, to a lower and more conservative increase of 1.94%, whereby:
 - 1.1 Proposal 3(g) will change to **£8,484,323** being the amount at 3(c) less the amount at 3(d) plus the amount at 3(e) less the amount at 3(f) calculated by the Council as the net Council Tax requirement for the year.
 - 1.2 Proposal 3(h) will change to **£198.60** being the amount at 3(g) above divided by the amount at 2(a), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those part of its area which no special item relates.
 - 1.3 Proposal 3(j) will change to **£294.37** being the amount at 3(g) above plus the amount at 3(i) divided by the amount at 2(a) calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
 - 1.4 Proposal 3(f) will change to **£316,301** being the original proposal for 3(f) less the difference between the original proposal for 3(g) and the amended 3(g) as above.
- 2.0 The revenue estimates for 2025/2026 and schedule of fees and charges, as submitted in the Council's Budget book be approved subject to removing the requested funding of £45,000 at row 6 of paragraph 3.23 of the Budget Book to 'support the action plan for Motion for the Ocean' recognising that:
 - 2.1 The discussion during item 11 of the Cabinet agenda paper on Tuesday 21 January 2025 acknowledged that this Council has already completed an impressive amount of work in this area. The discussion included a congratulatory message from an Ocean Expert and Co-founder of motion for the ocean who outlined how incredibly proud they are of all that this Council has achieved with trailblazing work, and as a leading light in this area.
 - 2.2 Item 11 of the Cabinet agenda paper on Tuesday 21 January 2025 clarified that other funds are proffered for activities around the commitment to increase ocean literacy.

- 2.3 Item 11 of the Cabinet agenda paper on Tuesday 21 January 2025 clarified that the £45,000 was to finance a touring theatre company to perform an experience of the ocean to all primary schools in the district, without assessing anticipated uptake, desire from local schools, alignment to curriculum, development of life skills, or measurable outcomes to demonstrate value for money.
- 3.0 Council allocates the sum of £39,000, funded by the removal of the £45,000 at paragraph 2.0 of this amendment to establish a pilot Members Ward Fund for the financial year 2025-26, whereby each individual member is allocated a sum of £1,000 to support charities, community groups and public bodies working within their wards for the benefit of residents.
- 4.0 Council allocates the sum of £6,000, funded by the removal of the £45,000 at paragraph 2.0 of this amendment for further tree planting within the district, including tree planting for flood alleviation schemes to assist in preventing future flooding.
- 5.0 Financial Implications (FIN24-25/2894)
- 5.1 The decision to reduce the increase in Council Tax from 2.99% to 1.94% would equate to a loss in Council Tax revenue in 2025/26 of £83,679. Over the four years of the MTFP, 2025/26 to 2028/29, this would amount to a reduction in funding from Council Tax of £370,914. The proposal suggests that this reduction in funding would be funded by the MTFP reserve for which there is sufficient funding available, however it should be noted that the ability for the Council to raise funding from future Council Tax increases will be reduced indefinitely.
- 5.2 The proposal also includes the reduction of spend of £45,000 in relation to the Motion for the Ocean. This spend is currently a one off (hence isn't included in future years within the Council's MTFP elsewhere on this agenda). The funding is then proposed to be re-allocated to fund a, one off, £39,000 pilot for a Members Ward fund and a, one off, £6,000 for further tree planting within the District. Should this part of the proposal be approved, the funding could be redirected, with any unspent funds in 2025/26 being allocated to the General Fund on 31 March 2026.
- 6.0 Legal Implications (LEG2425/9587)
- 6.1 If this amendment is carried a report will need to be submitted to Cabinet setting out detailed proposals for a Members Ward Fund, including resourcing implications. Cabinet may wish to task Policy and Performance Improvement Committee with developing the policy. Any necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution will need to be considered by Audit & Governance Committee for recommendation on to Full Council. Decisions in relation to tree planting proposals will be taken by Cabinet, Portfolio Holder or Officers as appropriate in accordance with Part C of the Council's Constitution – Responsibility for Functions.