

MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2026

AGENDA ITEM No. 8 – REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING FOR 2026/27

PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The following amendment will be proposed by Councillor Jack Kellas and seconded by Councillor Tim Wendels.

Recommendation (b) be amended to approve the proposals under section 3 of the report with the inclusion of a Members Ward Fund, added to the base budget for 2026/27, whereby each individual member is allocated a sum of £1,000 (£39,000 in total) to support charities, community groups and public bodies working within their wards for the benefit of residents; and that the Council Tax for 2026/27 is reduced by 1.12% rather than frozen. This would amend the recommendations within the report to:

- 3.1 The revenue estimates for 2026/2027 and schedule of fees and charges, as submitted in the Council's Budget book be approved; with an additional row added to the table at point 3.37 on page 10 of the budget book under the section 'Requested Changes by Members', as below:

Members Ward Fund for the financial year 2026-27, 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. **£39,000**

- 3.2 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2026/2027 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, based on a 1.12% council tax reduction:

(a) £57,948,340

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) to (4) of the Act;

(b) £37,209,230.00

being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act;

(c) £20,739,110

being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year;

(d) £12,845,000.00

being the amount of Government Grants (£7,827,000) and net retained Business Rates (£5,018,000) which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund;

(e) £0.00

being the amount which the Council has estimated in accordance with regulations issued under Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 as its proportion of the surplus/deficit on the Council Tax Collection Fund;

(f) £603,740

being the amount that the Council has determined to contribute to usable reserves;

(g) £8,497,850.00

being the amount at 3(c) above less the amount at 3(d) above plus the amount at 3(e) above less the amount at 3(f) above calculated by the Council as its' net Council Tax requirement for the year.

(h) £196.38

being the amount at 3(g) 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 parts of its area to which no special item relates.

(i) £4,330,014.00

being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act, the Council resolves there being no other special items;

(j) £296.44

being the amount at 3(g) above plus the amount at 3(i) above divided by the amount at 2(a) above calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;

Recommendations a, c and e remain unchanged, with updated recommendation d being noted subject to the approval of the amendment as described above.

Financial Implications (FIN25-26/4069)

The cost of the proposed Members ward fund would be £0.039m per annum. Adding this to the base budget would mean an additional cost of £0.156m over the Medium-Term Financial Plan (later on this agenda).

The cost of the proposed reduction in Council Tax by 1.12% would be £0.096m in 2026/27. The impact over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Plan would be £0.400m.

Therefore, the total financial implication of the proposed amendment would cost the Council £0.556m over the life of the Medium-Term Financial Plan, which could be funded through the Medium-Term Financial Plan Reserve. The balance on the MTFP Reserve (as identified on page 39 of the Budget Book) at the end of the MTFP period stands at £6.219m.

Legal Implications (LEG2526/2654)

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 and relevant fund criteria.