

2023/24 Budget & 2023-27 Medium Term Financial Plan

Cabinet	26 January 2023
Report Author	Chris Blundell (Acting Deputy Chief Executive)
Portfolio Holder	Cllr David Saunders, Cabinet Member for Finance
Status	For Recommendation
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	Budget and Policy Framework
Previously Considered by	Cabinet 12 January 2023

Executive Summary:

This is a covering report to present the draft General Fund 2023/24 Revenue Budget, alongside the capital programme and Medium Term Financial Plan, which was considered by Cabinet on 12 January 2023 and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17 January 2023.

Recommendation(s):

- That Cabinet consider recommending to Council the inclusion in the 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget of a £35,000 allocation the appointment of a 3rd officer for the home energy services team who will provide a cold buster service, to be wholly funded from our existing Better Care Fund allocation.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

As detailed in the body of the attached report

Legal

The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year by various pieces of legislation, notably section 31(A) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a suitably qualified named officer to keep control of the council's finances. The Director of Finance is currently undertaking this role in an acting up capacity. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 Officer to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations for the budget, and on the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves. The Council must have regard to the report when making decisions about the budget.

Corporate

The budget has been prepared with reference to the corporate priorities and this report gives Members the opportunity to review the council's proposed budget for 2021-22.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. Actions arising from this report - in particular the savings requirements - will each be assessed for equalities implications by relevant managers.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- Growth
- Environment
- Communities

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1. This is a covering report to present the draft 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget, the 2023-27 General Fund Capital Programme and the 2023-27 Medium Term Financial Plan, which was considered by Cabinet on 12 January 2023 and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17 January 2023.

2. Recommendations of OSP

- 2.1. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel was invited to comment on the attached report and the following recommendation was made for Cabinet to consider:

That cabinet considered recommending to council for inclusion in the 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget, the appointment of a 3rd officer for the home energy services team who will provide a cold buster service.

The officer will visit low income households in private sector housing to install low cost energy efficiency measures such as installing power down devices and carbon monoxide detection alarms in homes.

- 2.2. At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting, Officers confirmed that the role could potentially be funded in full from the existing Better Care Fund allocation, however it was advised that the funding is limited and therefore that a Cabinet report should be produced setting out the optimal use of the fund for its varying demands and competing priorities.

3. Options

Option 1 - Cabinet approves the recommendations of the OSP and adjusts the budget accordingly, with a £35,000 allocation for an additional officer appointment to provide a 'cold buster service'. This will result in an updated budget being presented for approval to the Full Council at its meeting on 9 February 2023.

Option 2 - Cabinet rejects the recommendation of OSP and the budget is presented in its current form for approval to Full Council at its meeting on 9 February 2023.

Option 3 - Cabinet defers any decision about the Cold Buster Service, until an assessment of the broad options for the use of the Better Care Fund is considered within a separate report to a subsequent Cabinet meeting. This will result in the budget being presented in its current form for approval to Full Council at its meeting on 9 February 2023.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1. The budget will be presented for approval to the meeting of Full Council on 9 February 2023. The exact form of the budget will be dependent on the option selected by Cabinet, as detailed in section 3.
- 4.2. However, it should be noted that whichever option is selected by Cabinet, Councillors may propose this or any other amendment (subject to the budget remaining balanced) to the budget at the meeting of Full Council on 9 February 2023.

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