

COUNCIL, THURSDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2023

AMENDMENT TO THE BUDGET SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR S SHEAHAN

I move the amendments to recommendations to item 12 GENERAL FUND BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2023/24 with amended areas highlighted in red.

Should these changes be agreed, members will need to be mindful of the consequential changes to agenda item 14 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2023/24. A separate Report has been prepared and will be issued to members should these proposed changes be agreed.

AGENDA ITEM 12 BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2023/24

Recommendations	<p>COUNCIL IS RECOMMENDED:</p> <p>1. TO APPROVE THE GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2023/24 AS SUMMARISED IN SECTION 2 OF THIS REPORT, SUBJECT TO THE CHANGES SHOWN IN THIS ALTERNATIVE BUDGET. THIS INCLUDES:</p> <p>a. INCREASING THE DISTRICTS SHARE OF COUNCIL TAX IN 2023/24 BY £3.24 TO £161.82 FOR A BAND D PROPERTY</p> <p>b. INCREASING THE SPECIAL EXPENSES SHARE OF THE COUNCIL TAX AS SET OUT IN SECTION 2.1</p> <p>c. CHANGES TO THE FEES AND CHARGES AS DETAILED IN APPENDIX 3(A) TO 3(C), EFFECTIVE FROM 1 APRIL 2023</p> <p>d. DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES TO CONSIDER ANY OBJECTIONS RECEIVED IN RELATION TO THE PROPOSED VARIATION OF FEES FOR VEHICLE AND OPERATORS' LICENCES UNDER S.70 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) ACT 1976, TO DETERMINE WHETHER IN LIGHT OF ANY OBJECTIONS THE VARIATION IN FEES SHOULD BE MODIFIED AND TO SET ANOTHER DATE ON WHICH THE VARIATION IN FEES WILL COME INTO FORCE, WITH OR WITHOUT MODIFICATION, AFTER CONSIDERATION OF THE SAID OBJECTIONS.</p> <p>2. TO NOTE THE GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2024/25 TO 2027/28 SUBJECT TO THE CHANGES SHOWN IN THIS ALTERNATIVE BUDGET (APPENDIX 1).</p> <p>3. TO APPROVE THE CORPORATE CHARGING POLICY 2023-2026 (APPENDIX 3D)</p>
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	<p>4. TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME (APPENDIX 4) FOR 2023/24 AND PLANNED FINANCING, AS SET OUT IN SECTION 3 OF THIS REPORT.</p> <p>5. TO NOTE THE REMAINING ELEMENTS OF THE GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 – 2027/28.</p> <p>6. TO APPROVE THE FLEET REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME FOR 2024/25, TO ALLOW VEHICLES TO BE ORDERED IN ADVANCE ONCE APPROVAL HAS BEEN GIVEN TO MOVE THIS FROM THE DEVELOPMENT TO THE ACTIVE POOL (APPENDIX 4).</p> <p>7. TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2023/24 (APPENDIX 6) AS SUMMARISED IN SECTION 4 SUBJECT TO THE CHANGES SHOWN IN THIS ALTERNATIVE BUDGET. THIS INCLUDES:</p> <p>a. SETTING THE SPECIAL EXPENSE BAND D COUNCIL TAX AT THE LEVELS DETAILED IN TABLE 4 OF THIS REPORT.</p> <p>8. TO APPROVE THE CONTINUATION OF NWLDC IN THE LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (LLEP) BUSINESS RATES POOL IN 2023/24.</p> <p>9. TO APPROVE THE DRAWDOWN FROM RESERVES TO FUND THE ONE OFF BUDGET PROPOSALS AS DETAILED IN THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET SUMMARY 2023/24 TO 2027/28 (APPENDIX 1).</p> <p>10. TO APPROVE THE CONTRIBUTION TO RESERVES AS DETAILED IN THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET SUMMARY 2023/24 TO 2027/28 (APPENDIX 1).</p> <p>11. TO DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE S151 OFFICER IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CORPORATE PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO ACTION A VIREMENT ON GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND EVENTS TO REALIGN THE BUDGETS ON SPECIAL EXPENSES SUBJECT TO THE CHANGES SHOWN IN THIS ALTERNATIVE BUDGET.</p>

1.0 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GENERAL FUND BUDGETS

1.1 The Labour Group proposes eight changes to the General Fund budgets as set out below:

- A. That more targeted support be provided to more vulnerable residents to address the cost of living crisis. We propose a budget of £30k as a one-off additional grant

to Citizens Advice Bureau to be used specifically to employ an advisor for the next year to assist with financial advice. This is a one-year commitment subject to a review towards the end of the year.

- B. That an additional Planning Enforcement Officer be employed at an additional annual cost of £43k.
- C. That a part time staff resource of £22k is provided to promote North West Leicestershire as a tourism destination.
- D. That an incentive scheme to 'rebalance the economy' by working with business representatives and skills advisors in the area at an additional cost of £41k per annum.
- E. That the Council reduces its expenditure on consultants over the next five years. Expenditure to be reduced by 25% in 2023/24, 35% in 2024/25 and 50% from 2025/26 onwards.
- F. That the District Council increases the level of its procurement spend in the local North West Leicestershire economy. As well as demonstrating the additional local spend, we would expect the Council to work more closely with local business groups in order to promote local procurement. We would expect any premium from buying local to be covered by overall efficiencies in procurement spend during the year. There are no additional financial implications arising from this proposal.
- G. To produce a detailed business case to build and operate workspaces for small businesses. The business case will have particular focus to promoting creative industry businesses and providing workspace that enables businesses to 'start up' and grow within North West Leicestershire. This is a one off cost of £25k in 2023/24.
- H. It is proposed to increase the District element of the Council Tax in 2023/24 by £3.24 on a Band D property. This will see the Band D District element increase from £158.58 to £161.82 (a 2.04% increase).

The impact of these changes are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Summary of changes to the General Fund Budget

	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
GF Starting position						
GF Surplus/(Deficit)	(24)	1,628	2,208	2,469	3,905	10,186
Labour Alternative Budget changes	0	(55)	(50)	(27)	(15)	(147)
(see Paragraph 1.1 above and Appendix 11 for further detail on the proposed changes)						
GF Alternative Budget Surplus/(Deficit)	(24)	1,573	2,158	2,442	3,890	10,039

2.0 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SPECIAL EXPENSES BUDGETS

- 2.1 The Labour Group proposes to increase the budget for the Special Expense areas by £49k to be funded from an increase in Council Tax for Coalville of 9% and other Special Expense areas of 5%. The budget for each special expense area is set out in a Revised Appendix 6 and the Band D Special Expenses Council Tax are set out in the table below:

	22/23	Increase	23/24
Appleby Magna	£7.08	£0.35	£7.43
Coalville	£73.81	£6.64	£80.45
Coleorton	£10.63	£0.53	£11.16
Hugglescote	£15.27	£0.76	£16.03
Lockington & Hemington	£13.72	£0.69	£14.41
Measham	£1.87	£0.09	£1.96
Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	£6.10	£0.31	£6.41
Ravenstone with Snibston	£1.29	£0.06	£1.35
Stretton-en-le-Field	£73.11	£3.66	£76.77
Whitwick	£9.55	£0.48	£10.03

- 2.2 The increase in the Special Expense level of Council Tax is required to be included in the calculations when assessing the District level of Council Tax increase against the statutory requirements for a council tax referendum. The maximum Council Tax allowed increase for district councils without triggering the need to hold a referendum is an increase of upto 3% or £5, whichever is higher.
- 2.3 The average increase in Band D Council Tax of the District Council element and the Special Expenses element is £4.51, or 2.58%.

3.0 CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER ASSESSMENT OF ROBUSTNESS OF BUDGET ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES

- 3.1 Section 25(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) to provide their professional assessment on the robustness of budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves prior to the Budget and Council Tax being considered by Council. Agenda item 10 provides Council with the CFO's assessment on the Administration's proposed budget.
- 3.2 The CFO has undertaken an initial review of the alternative budget proposals contained in this report and can indicatively provide a positive opinion. However, it should be noted this review has not been undertaken in the level of depth as the proposed Administration's budget due to the short period of time available to assess the proposals. If Alternative Budget proposals were adopted by Council a more in depth review would be required as part of their implementation.