

Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Tuesday, 15 November 2022

Agenda Item No	Topic	Decision	Reasons	Alternative Options
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Part A – Items considered in public

A7	General Fund Budget Options & Medium Term Financial Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the projections set out in Appendix A of report CAB3374 be noted and the proposal that the Exceptional Inflation Reserve be used if required to address the forecast deficit for 2023/24 be supported. 2. That, subject to final Government Spending Review announcements in December 2022, any additional grant award (such as continuation of New Homes Bonus) not included in current forecasts be used to fund the forecast deficit before 	<p>All councils are facing serious and immediate pressures as a result of global and national issues that have resulted in increased energy costs, inflation running at over 10%, increased interest rates and general economic volatility. No immediate Government support is anticipated, and councils will have to make difficult decisions and to use reserves to achieve a balanced budget for 2023/24 and beyond.</p> <p>After the emergency revised budget that was approved during the pandemic and a further £3m savings approved in 2021/22, scope</p>	<p>Scope for additional savings in 23/24 to reduce the use of reserves does exist but would have a very significant and direct impact on service levels and service quality. With the uncertainty that exists regarding future funding, the recommended balance between savings and use of reserves to achieve a balanced budget is considered reasonable.</p> <p>However, it is essential that work to identify longer term savings through the Strategic Budget Review as set out in this report is critical to ensure the Council can meet its obligation to set a balanced</p>
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		<p>reserves are used.</p> <p>3. That the Medium-Term Financial Strategy be approved, as set out in sections 22-28 of the report.</p> <p>4. That an increase to Garden Waste subscriptions with effect from November 2022 be approved in order to achieve cost recovery, resulting in charges increasing to £43 for small bins and £65 for large bins. For residents in receipt of a council tax reduction, to increase the discount from £10 to £15 on the cost of purchasing the green waste service.</p> <p>5. That, following consultation, parking</p>	<p>to achieve budget reductions has been severely reduced in recent years. However, it is clear that further changes are needed and work is underway to identify strategic changes to service delivery to achieve this by 2024/25.</p> <p>Report CAB3374 sets out the challenge for 2023/24 and beyond and includes some more immediate proposals to reduce the impact on Council reserves. Subject to changes being approved, it is possible to set a balanced budget although some call on the Exceptional Inflation Reserve approved in July 2022 is required to achieve this. The report also includes the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets out the Council’s strategic approach to the use and management</p>	<p>budget in 2024/25.</p>

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		<p>charges in Zone 1 (City Centre) car parks be subject to an increase in line with inflation (10%) and that charges and weekday charging periods or times for these car parks be extended to include Sundays and bank holidays with new overnight charging introduced, to be implemented as soon as is practicable. There is no increase to Park and Walk or Park and Ride charging as part of this recommendation.</p> <p>6. That Sunday on-street parking restrictions within the Winchester Inner Area Parking Permit Zone and on city centre parking meters be added to the Traffic Regulation</p>	<p>of its financial resources.</p>	

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		<p>Order Programme for 22/23. The exact zones to be included will be subject to consultation.</p> <p>7. That, following consultation, parking charges in “market town” car parks be increased by a 20p flat amount on each chargeable rate; to £2.00 for the daily rate (where charged); and no change to season tickets, to be implemented as soon as is practicable. This change will not apply to the Alresford Station Car Park, where charges were amended recently.</p> <p>8. That other fees and charges be increased where appropriate in line with the September</p>		

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		<p>Consumer Price Index figure (10.1%) to address contractual increases, to achieve cost recovery or to bring a fee in line with the market norm and that the Section 151 officer be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Value and the Cabinet Member responsible for the service, to approve a different fee where appropriate.</p> <p>9. That £450k of the Transitional Reserve be used to support a council wide transformation challenge programme, incorporating focussed independent reviews of key services over the next 6 months with the</p>		

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		<p>clear aim of determining longer term savings or income generation to support the delivery of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Council Plan.</p> <p>10. That £900k of the existing “Business Rates Retention Reserve” be re-allocated to the “Exceptional Inflation Reserve”.</p> <p>11. That a detailed budget be prepared for consideration by Council in February 2023 based on the above assumptions, final spending review announcements and including the following options:</p>		

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		<p>a. That grants to core housing providers totalling £68,000 be funded from the Homelessness Prevention Fund rather than the General Fund base budget</p> <p>b. That, in relation to staffing matters:</p> <p>i. an additional “vacancy management” provision of £200k be included</p> <p>ii. an additional £23k per annum be included to fund an additional tree officer to support the delivery of essential works.</p> <p>iii. £250k be included to fund the outcome from a review of salaries</p>		

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		<p>and to maintain reasonable parity with neighbouring councils.</p> <p>c. That, in relation to the council’s regeneration programme:</p> <p>i. as the existing contract for strategic development advice will end in early 2023, £150k is included for the next phase of professional advice needed to assist in preparing for the major decisions we will be bringing forward for regeneration projects</p> <p>ii. £130k is included to fund staffing to support the move into delivery phase for our</p>		

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		<p>major regeneration projects from 2023 onwards</p> <p>d. that, in relation to services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the annual transfer to the Asset Reserve be reduced from £250k to £100k in 2023/24 (one year only) and the transfer to the Parking reserve be suspended for one year only ii. an additional £80k per annum be included to address the impact of the “On Street parking” agency ending in 2023 iii. an additional £50k per annum be included to fund additional “street 		

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		<p>scene works”</p> <p>iv. an additional £67k per annum be included to fund essential health and safety related tree works</p> <p>v. £15k per annum for 2 years be included to ensure existing grant funding for the Hampshire Cultural Trust can be maintained</p> <p>e. That Council Tax will increase in line with the Government referendum limits (currently a maximum of £5 for a Band D property).</p>		

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A9	Rural England Prosperity Fund – Investment Plan Proposal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the UK Rural England Prosperity Fund (Rural Fund) proposed investment interventions and rank be noted as set out in Table 3 of report CAB3372. 2. That the list of interventions and indicative Rural Fund allocation as outlined in Table 4 of the report be noted, to be funded from the Council’s allocation of the Rural Fund. 3. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Head of Service: Economy & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business and Culture, to take the necessary 	<p>In September Government announced a top-up to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with an additional grant allocation to local authorities under the Rural England Prosperity Fund. Winchester City Council has been allocated £745,096 of funding to be spent on support for rural businesses and rural communities. As with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund the council is required to submit to Government by the end of November an online application in the form of an investment plan to enable access to the funds.</p> <p>Report CAB3372 sets out the investment proposals under which capital projects can come forward for funding from the market towns,</p>	<p>Do not submit an investment plan to draw down the council’s Rural Fund allocation. This is not recommended as the council would miss out on the opportunity to secure £745,000 funding for the rural businesses, communities and places across the district.</p>

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		<p>decisions and actions required to submit an investment plan and accept the allocation of funds.</p> <p>4. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Head of Service: Economy & Communities to implement and administer the scheme and all related grant schemes and plans in accordance with the requirements and priorities of the prospectus and fund.</p> <p>5. That a capital budget of £745,096 to be funded by the Rural Fund be approved.</p> <p>6. That authority be</p>	<p>villages and rural areas of Winchester district. The investment priorities and indicative funding profile over the two-year programme April 2023 to March 2025 is also provided and will form the basis of the Council's investment plan.</p>	

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		<p>delegated to the Corporate Head of Service: Economy & Communities, in consultation with the S151 officer, to incur capital expenditure in accordance with the requirements of the Fund.</p>		