

COUNTY COUNCIL

28TH FEBRUARY 2024

REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2024/25 TO 2026/27

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS:-

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

1. that the Budget Strategy for 2024/25, which includes the amendments at paragraph 4.1.5, be approved;
2. to approve the Band D Council Tax for 2024/25 of £1,602.80 (an increase of 7.5%);
3. to approve the removal of specific savings proposals as identified in paragraph 3.2.7;
4. to approve the use of £3m from the RSG reserve, being £2m to support temporary costs of commissioned residential children's placements and £1m to support the delegated schools budget, as outlined in paragraph 5.2.3;
5. to approve the Medium Term Financial Plan which will form the basis of future years' planning;
6. that authority be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, to make any amendments necessary as a consequence of the WG final settlement due on 27th February 2024.

Reasons:

To enable the Authority to set its Revenue Budget for the Council Fund and resultant Council Tax for 2024/25.

Cabinet Decision Required YES

Council Decision Required YES

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:

Cllr. Alun Lenny – Cabinet Member for Resources

Directorate:
Corporate Services

Name of Head of Service:
Randal Hemingway

Report Author:
Randal Hemingway

Designations:

Head of Financial
Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COUNTY COUNCIL 28TH FEBRUARY 2024

REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2024/25 TO 2026/27

This report brings together the latest proposals for the Revenue Budget 2024/25 with indicative figures for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

It summarises the latest Budgetary position giving an update on the budget validation, spending pressures, the Welsh Government final settlement and the responses from the budget consultation.

Members are required to consider the proposals within this report and make recommendations on the budget to County Council, in accordance with Council Policy.

Documents Attached:

- Report of the Director of Corporate Services
- Table 1 – Council Fund Summary
- Appendix A – Budget reduction proposals
- Appendix B – Budget pressures
- Appendix C – Consultation Report

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: **Randal Hemingway** **Head of Financial Services**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets	Biodiversity & Climate Change
YES	NONE	YES	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The budget has been prepared having regard for the Council's Corporate Strategy, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Equalities Impact Assessments have been undertaken on the budget proposals in order to consider and assess the potential impact with respect to protected characteristic groups. The Equalities Impact Assessments will be further developed following consideration of possible mitigation measures.

3. Finance

The implications on the 2024/25 Budget of the latest proposals as set out in the report are as follows:

- Proposed Net County Council Budget of £479.932m
- Proposed Council Tax increase of 7.5% for 2024/25 – Band D of £1,602.80

The 2024/25 budget proposals assume a contribution from the RSG reserve of £3m to fund one off expenditure on Children Services and Education.

The Medium Term Financial Plan highlights that the funding growth in respect of 2025/26 and 2026/27 will be significantly lower than 2024/25 and therefore does not match the expected expenditure demand and there are significant budget reductions to be identified. Over the 2 years 2025/26 & 2026/27 it is estimated that a total of £24m budget reductions will be required (based on a 4% and 3% Council Tax increase).

4. Risk

There are significant financial risks contained within this Budget Strategy. The main risks being documented in Paragraph 4.1.12 of the report.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: **C. Moore** **Director of Corporate Services**

1. Scrutiny Committee request for pre-determination	YES/NO/N/A – Delete as appropriate
If yes include the following information: -	
Scrutiny Committee	
Date the report was considered:	
Scrutiny Committee Outcome/Recommendations: Consultation with all Scrutiny committees undertaken.	
2. Local Member(s) Not Applicable	
3. Community / Town Council Consultation with the Town & Community Council Forum undertaken	
4. Relevant Partners Consultation with relevant partners will be undertaken	
5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations Consultation with Representatives undertaken	
CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED	YES

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
2023/24 3-year Revenue Budget		Corporate Services Department, County Hall, Carmarthen
WG Provisional Settlement		Corporate Services Department, County Hall, Carmarthen