

TO: COUNCIL
21 FEBRUARY 2024

FINANCIAL PLANS AND REVENUE BUDGETS 2024/25
Executive Director: Resources

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At its meeting on 06 February 2024, the Executive considered the 2024/25 proposals for the revenue and capital budgets. The recommendations on these proposals are submitted to the Council by the Executive and are included in section 2 covering all planned spending, service developments and expenditure reductions for next year.
- 1.2 A separate document presents an overview of the Council's spending plans for 2024/25 and detailed budgets for the General Fund and capital programme. The document reflects the Executive's recommendations and includes the reports considered by it.
- 1.3 In order to set a legal budget the full Council must make a formal Council Tax resolution. The Localism Act 2011 made several changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, and now requires the Council to calculate a council tax requirement for the year rather than a budget requirement. The appropriate resolution to give effect to the proposals contained in the separate budget report is included in section 3.
- 1.4 The Council Tax Resolution also refers to the Council's capital programme. The revenue budget proposals allow for a council funded capital programme of £8.462m recommended by the Executive.
- 1.5 The resolution in Section 3 also includes reference to the Council Tax for the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority (RBFA) and all Parish Councils as the precepts of these bodies must be included in this Council's formal Council Tax Resolution. The precept for the RBFA will be agreed at its meeting on 15 February 2024 and for Bracknell Town Council on the 21 February 2024. The Council Tax Resolution assumes a 2.99% (£2.36 for a Band D property) increase in the RBFA precept and a 2.00% (£1.95 for a Band D property) increase in the BTC precept; however, should these prove to be incorrect paragraphs 3.3, 3.5 and 3.6 of the Council Tax Resolution will be revised and re-issued once the precept is agreed.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS SUBMITTED BY THE EXECUTIVE

2.1 Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2026/27

RECOMMENDED:

- i) General Fund capital funding of £13.016m for 2024/25 in respect of those schemes listed on pages 175 to 177, of which £8.462m be funded from Council resources;
- ii) The inclusion of £4.554m of expenditure to be externally funded (including £0.380m of S106 funding) as outlined in the summary report for Council (page 170) and included on pages 175 to 177;

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- iii) That those schemes that attract external grant funding be recommended to the Council for inclusion within the 2024/25 capital programme at the level of funding received;
- iv) Capital schemes that require external funding can only proceed once the Council has received confirmation that the grant will be awarded;
- v) The inclusion of an additional budget of £1m for 'Invest to Save' schemes.

2.2 Revenue Budget 2024/25

RECOMMENDED that:

- i) The budget proposals set out in Table 1 (page 2) of the summary report for Council, subject to the changes identified in sections 3.2 to 3.5 (pages 3 to 6), 3.7 (pages 7 to 8), 3.9 to 3.10 (pages 9 to 10), 4.1 to 4.5 (pages 10 to 14), 4.7 (page 16) and 6.2 to 6.4 (page 18) of the report, be agreed;
- ii) Fees and charges as set out in Annexe G (pages 109 to 164) be approved;
- iii) A provision for inflation of £4.507m be approved;
- iv) A further council tax discount is funded by Bracknell Forest Council in 2024/25 of £75 for working age households receiving council tax support (section 3.10.1(a) page 9);
- v) The additional grant funding received in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 5 February 2024 be allocated to social care services (£0.754m in Social Care Grant) and to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities services (£0.268m in Funding Guarantee and £0.010m in Services Grant) with no net budget impact;
- vi) The commitment budget as set out in Annexe A be approved (pages 20 to 21);
- v) That the Council should make additional funding available for distribution to schools through the local funding formula at the level set out in section 4.1 (pages 10 to 11) of the summary report for Council subject to any minor amendments made by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning following the receipt of definitive funding allocations for Early Years and High Needs pupils;
- vi) A general contingency totalling £4.000m be included, use of which is authorised by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Director: Resources in accordance with the delegations included in the Council's constitution;
- vii) Subject to the above recommendations the revised draft budget proposals be agreed;
- viii) A contribution of £1.509m to be made from the Future Funding Reserve (including £0.038m additional interest from the use of balances) to support revenue expenditure;
- ix) Total net expenditure (after use of balances) of £97.356m (page 19), be approved;
- x) The Council's Council Tax requirement, excluding Parish Council precepts, be set at £80.312m (page 19);

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- xi) The Council Tax for the Council's services for each Valuation Band be set as follows:

Band	Tax Level Relative to Band D	£
A	6/9	1,077.42
B	7/9	1,256.99
C	8/9	1,436.56
D	9/9	1,616.13
E	11/9	1,975.27
F	13/9	2,334.41
G	15/9	2,693.55
H	18/9	3,232.26

At the meeting on 06 February 2024 the Executive recommended the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and noted that strategy together with the Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement were matters which the Council needed to approve.

- xii) The Council approves the following indicators, limits, strategies and policies included in Annexe E (pages 78 to 99):
- The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2024/25 to 2026/27 contained within Annexe E(i);
 - The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy contained within Annexe E(ii);
 - The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, and the Treasury Prudential Indicators contained in Annexe E(iii);
 - The Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator in Annexe E(iii);
 - The Investment Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27 and Treasury Management Limits on Activity contained in Annexe E(iv);
- xiii) The following additional Council Tax premiums be applied from 1 April 2025:
- A 100% premium for properties which have been empty and unfurnished for longer than one year (rather than 2 years as currently) and;
 - A 100% premium for second homes.
- xiv) The formal Council Tax Resolution contained in section 3 be approved.

3 COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

3.1 That the recommendations of the Executive outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2 be agreed.

3.2 That it be noted that the amounts calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 are:

(a) 49,694 **TAX BASE FOR THE WHOLE COUNCIL AREA**

being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, as its council tax base for the year

(b) **TAX BASE FOR PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA**

EACH PARISH AREA

Binfield	4,799
Bracknell	20,968
Crowthorne	3,429
Sandhurst	7,999
Warfield	5,538
Winkfield	6,961

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as amended, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate

3.3 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act):

(a) £353,204,472 **TOTAL EXPENDITURE INCLUDING GENERAL FUND, PARISH PRECEPTS AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY DEFICIT ON THE COLLECTION FUND**

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

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- (b) £268,689,150 **TOTAL INCOME INCLUDING GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND THE COUNCIL'S SHARE OF ANY SURPLUS ON THE COLLECTION FUND**

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

- (c) £84,515,322 **BOROUGH AND PARISH PRECEPTS NET EXPENDITURE TO BE FINANCED FROM COUNCIL TAX**

being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year

- (d) £1,700.71 **AVERAGE BAND "D" COUNCIL TAX FOR WHOLE BOROUGH**

being the amount at 3.3(c) above, divided by the amount at 3.2(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 (including Parish precepts)

- (e) £4,203,358 **PARISH PRECEPTS**

being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act

- (f) £1,616.13 **BOROUGH COUNCIL TAX FOR BAND "D" PROPERTIES**

being the amount at 3.3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3.3(e) above by the amount at 3.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year if there were an area of the Borough to which no special item relates

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(g)	Part of the Council's area	BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH PARISH FOR BAND "D"	£
		Binfield	1,676.84
		Bracknell	1,715.43
		Crowthorne	1,709.77
		Sandhurst	1,694.67
		Warfield	1,665.89
		Winkfield	1,703.04

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3.3(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate

(h) Part of the Council's area **BOROUGH AND PARISH COUNCIL TAX IN EACH PARISH FOR EACH VALUATION BAND**

Parish	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	1,117.89	1,304.21	1,490.52	1,676.84	2,049.47	2,422.10	2,794.73	3,353.68
Bracknell	1,143.62	1,334.22	1,524.83	1,715.43	2,096.64	2,477.84	2,859.05	3,430.86
Crowthorne	1,139.85	1,329.82	1,519.80	1,709.77	2,089.72	2,469.67	2,849.62	3,419.54
Sandhurst	1,129.78	1,318.08	1,506.37	1,694.67	2,071.26	2,447.86	2,824.45	3,389.34
Warfield	1,110.59	1,295.69	1,480.79	1,665.89	2,036.09	2,406.29	2,776.48	3,331.78
Winkfield	1,135.36	1,324.59	1,513.81	1,703.04	2,081.49	2,459.95	2,838.40	3,406.08

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.3(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands

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- 3.4 That it be noted that for the year 2024/25 the Police and Crime Panel have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley	179.52	209.44	239.36	269.28	329.12	388.96	448.80	538.56

- 3.5 That it be noted that for the year 2024/25 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, subject to confirmation by the Fire Authority on 15 February, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Royal Berkshire Fire Authority	54.21	63.24	72.28	81.31	99.38	117.45	135.52	162.62

- 3.6 That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.3(h), 3.4 and 3.5 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

(a) Part of the Council's area	TOTAL COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH VALUATION BAND							
Parish	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	1,351.62	1,576.89	1,802.16	2,027.43	2,477.97	2,928.51	3,379.05	4,054.86
Bracknell	1,377.35	1,606.90	1,836.47	2,066.02	2,525.14	2,984.25	3,443.37	4,132.04
Crowthorne	1,373.58	1,602.50	1,831.44	2,060.36	2,518.22	2,976.08	3,433.94	4,120.72
Sandhurst	1,363.51	1,590.76	1,818.01	2,045.26	2,499.76	2,954.27	3,408.77	4,090.52
Warfield	1,344.32	1,568.37	1,792.43	2,016.48	2,464.59	2,912.70	3,360.80	4,032.96
Winkfield	1,369.09	1,597.27	1,825.45	2,053.63	2,509.99	2,966.36	3,422.72	4,107.26

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable the Council to make a formal Council Tax resolution by setting a revenue budget, Council Tax level and capital budget for 2024/25.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Background information relating to the options considered is included in the supporting information.

6 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 6.1 The attached 'Financial Plans and Budget Supporting Information 2024/25' presents an overview of the Council's spending plans for 2024/25 and detailed budgets for the General Fund and capital programme. The document reflects the Executive's recommendations and includes summaries of the reports considered by it.

7 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 Nothing to add to the report.

Executive Director: Resources

- 7.2 The financial implications of this report are included in the supporting information.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 The Council's budget proposals impact on a wide range of services. A detailed consultation was undertaken on the draft budget proposals published in December to provide individuals and groups the opportunity to provide comments.

- 7.4 None of the budget proposals require specific equality impact assessments to be carried out.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.5 The supporting information sets out the key risks facing the Council's budget and the arrangements in place to manage these risks, including maintaining an appropriate level of reserves and contingency.

Climate Change Implications

- 7.6 There are no implications arising from the proposals in this report, which are recommending budget proposals to Council.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Details of the consultation process and responses received are included in the supporting information.

Contact for further information

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