

**TO: COUNCIL
26 FEBRUARY 2025**

**FINANCIAL PLANS AND REVENUE BUDGETS 2025/26
Executive Director: Resources**

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At its meeting on 11 February 2025, the Cabinet considered the 2025/26 proposals for the revenue and capital budgets. The recommendations on these proposals are submitted to the Council by the Cabinet 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 2025/26 and detailed budgets for the General Fund and capital programme. The document reflects the Cabinet'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 £8.388m recommended by the Cabinet.
- 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 and Town 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 19 February 2025. The Council Tax Resolution assumes a 6.15% (£5 for a Band D property) increase in the RBFA precept; however, should this 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 CABINET

2.1 Capital Programme 2025/26 - 2027/28

RECOMMENDED:

- i) General Fund capital funding of £14.386m for 2025/26 in respect of those schemes listed on pages 203 to 205, of which £8.388m be funded from Council resources;
- ii) The inclusion of £5.998m of expenditure to be externally funded (including £0.380m of S106 funding) as outlined in the summary report for Council (page 199) and included on pages 203 to 205;
- iii) That those schemes that attract external grant funding be recommended to the Council for inclusion within the 2025/26 capital

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- 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;
- vi) The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts policy for 2024/25 to 2026/27 included on pages 206 to 213 be approved.

2.2 Revenue Budget 2025/26

RECOMMENDED:

- i) The budget proposals set out in Table 1 (page 3) of the summary report for Council, subject to the changes identified in sections 3.2 to 3.5 (pages 3 to 6), 3.7 (page 7), 3.9 to 3.10 (pages 8 to 9), 4.1 to 4.5 (pages 10 to 13), 4.7 (page 16) and 6.2 to 6.3 (page 18) of the report, which are reflected in the final pressures and savings proposals in Annexe D (pages 77 to 89), be agreed;
- ii) Fees and charges as set out in Annexe G (pages 135 to 193) be approved;
- iii) A provision for inflation of £4.616m be approved;
- iv) A further council tax discount of £50 for working age households receiving council tax (£0.170m), and a one-off increase of £0.088m in the budget allocated for Section 13A Council Tax reliefs and associated administrative support (£0.045m), is funded by Bracknell Forest Council in 2025/26 from the Financial Hardship Reserve (section 3.10.1(a) pages 8 to 9);
- v) The additional grant funding received in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 3 February 2025 be allocated to Children's Social Care (an additional £0.008m of Children's Social Care Prevention Grant) and to the Contingency Fund (£0.042m of Employer National Insurance Contribution Grant) with no net budget impact;
- vi) The commitment budget as set out in Annexe A be approved (pages 20 to 26);
- 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 (page 10) 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 £3.992m 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) Total net expenditure (after use of balances) of £105.597m (page 19), be approved;
- ix) The Council's Council Tax requirement, excluding Parish Council precepts, be set at £85.667m (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	1,131.18
B	7/9	1,319.71
C	8/9	1,508.24
D	9/9	1,696.77
E	11/9	2,073.83
F	13/9	2,450.89
G	15/9	2,827.95
H	18/9	3,393.54

At the meeting on 11 February 2025 the Executive recommended the 2025/26 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 90 to 125):
- The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2025/26 to 2027/28 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 2025/26 to 2027/28 and Treasury Management Limits on Activity contained in Annexe E(iv);
- xiii) The Council approves the Reserves and Balances Policy Statement included in Annexe F (pages 126 to 134);
- 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 2025/26 in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 are:

(a) **50,488 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	4,892
Bracknell	21,318
Crowthorne	3,679
Sandhurst	8,033
Warfield	5,577
Winkfield	6,989

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 2025/26 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act):

(a) **£398,952,296 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) **£308,800,048 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) **£90,152,248 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) **£1,785.62 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) **£4,485,724 PARISH PRECEPTS**

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

- (f) **£1,696.77 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	1,758.90
		Bracknell	1,801.02
		Crowthorne	1,798.37
		Sandhurst	1,778.45
		Warfield	1,754.52
		Winkfield	1,783.68

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	1,172.60	1,368.03	1,563.47	1,758.90	2,149.77	2,540.63	2,931.50	3,517.80
Bracknell	1,200.68	1,400.79	1,600.91	1,801.02	2,201.25	2,601.47	3,001.70	3,602.04
Crowthorne	1,198.91	1,398.73	1,598.55	1,798.37	2,198.01	2,597.65	2,997.28	3,596.74
Sandhurst	1,185.63	1,383.24	1,580.84	1,778.45	2,173.66	2,568.87	2,964.08	3,556.90
Warfield	1,169.68	1,364.63	1,559.57	1,754.52	2,144.41	2,534.31	2,924.20	3,509.04
Winkfield	1,189.12	1,387.31	1,585.49	1,783.68	2,180.05	2,576.43	2,972.80	3,567.36

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 2025/26 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	188.85	220.33	251.80	283.28	346.23	409.18	472.13	566.56

- 3.5 That it be noted that for the year 2025/26 the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, subject to confirmation by the Fire Authority on 19 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	57.54	67.13	76.72	86.31	105.49	124.67	143.85	172.62

- 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 2025/26 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

(a) Part of the Council's area	TOTAL COUNCIL TAX FOR EACH VALUATION BAND							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Parish	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Binfield	1,418.99	1,655.49	1,891.99	2,128.49	2,601.49	3,074.48	3,547.48	4,256.98
Bracknell	1,447.07	1,688.25	1,929.43	2,170.61	2,652.97	3,135.32	3,617.68	4,341.22
Crowthorne	1,445.30	1,686.19	1,927.07	2,167.96	2,649.73	3,131.50	3,613.26	4,335.92
Sandhurst	1,432.02	1,670.70	1,909.36	2,148.04	2,625.38	3,102.72	3,580.06	4,296.08
Warfield	1,416.07	1,652.09	1,888.09	2,124.11	2,596.13	3,068.16	3,540.18	4,248.22
Winkfield	1,435.51	1,674.77	1,914.01	2,153.27	2,631.77	3,110.28	3,588.78	4,306.54

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 2025/26.

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 2025/26' presents an overview of the Council's spending plans for 2025/26 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.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 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 and Ecological Impact

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

Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 7.6 None.

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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