

DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN AND BUDGET FOR 2023/24

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: Yes
Report to: Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Service
11 January 2023

Purpose of Report

1. This paper sets out the draft proposals for the Council's Corporate Plan and Budget for 2023/24.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is asked to consider the proposals for 2023/24 set out in the appended Corporate Plan and Budget 2023/24 report and agree any comments or recommendations that it wishes to make to Cabinet on:
 - (a) **The financial outlook facing the Council over the medium term;**
 - (b) **The proposed increase in Council Tax;**
 - (c) **The strategy to use Treasury Management income and then, if needed, General Reserve to balance the budget over the medium term;**
 - (d) **Updates to the Capital Programme and strategy; and**
 - (e) **The service commentaries and supporting summary budget tables for each service area.**

Background

3. The Council approves a Corporate Plan and Budget annually which sets out how it will deliver its services and spend its financial resources in the following financial year. The draft proposals for 2023/24 are set out in Appendix A to this report, which the Committee will formally consider at its meeting on 11 January 2023. This includes draft plans for services which propose activities, projects, and levels of performance for the coming year (set out at section 2 of the report). These are supported by a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) that presents the financial assumptions and makes recommendations to achieve a balanced budget position (set out at section 1 of the report). Together with considerations for the update to the Capital Programme and Strategy (set out at section 3).
4. The draft Corporate Plan and Budget has been produced against a backdrop of significant financial and economic challenges both nationally and locally. With ongoing uncertainty in local government finance across both the short and medium term, particularly in relation to proposed funding reform. We also await the final Local Government Financial Settlement, the impact of which will be included in the report to Cabinet on 6 February 2022.

Consideration by Members

5. The Council has a clear and robust process for Member scrutiny of the draft Corporate Plan and Budget. Its publication on 16 December 2022 marked the start of the six-week consultation period. The Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Service has until the end of that period to submit its comments on the proposals to Cabinet, which will review them when they meet on 6 February 2023. Members wishing to seek clarification or further information on the proposals are encouraged to contact the relevant Head of Service and arrange an informal discussion ahead of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Service.
6. The Corporate Plan and Budget for 2023/24, with any necessary revisions, will then be submitted for approval by Council at its meeting on 1 March 2023, in the usual way. The final version will be published on the Council's website.

Financial Implications

7. The Council sets its service and Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) together with its Council Tax levels each year. Members may wish to scrutinise the Council Tax rise of £4.95 to Band D properties (a 2.75% increase) which is within the allowable limit of 2.99%. Should Members wish to increase Council Tax to the highest allowable level of 2.99%, this would be an increase of £5.40 to Band D properties. Details of this are set out in the report.
8. The report also sets out the financial outlook faced by the Council in 2023/24 and summarises the four-year position in the MTFP, for 2023/24 this is required to be a balanced position. Please note, as with any set of Corporate Plan and Budget proposals, if Members are not supportive of any particular element(s) of the package, alternative item(s), would need to be identified and agreed to achieve a balanced budget.

Risk Management Implications

9. The strategic risks associated with the delivery of the proposals within this Corporate Plan will be considered in full in the usual way as part of the Council's annual strategic risk management process, which identifies key risk areas along with contingency and mitigation plans to alleviate them. These will be reported to this Committee within the usual annual cycle.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

10. As in previous years the various proposals contained within this report would be subject to equalities impact assessments where this is appropriate. The purpose of the assessment is to determine whether it is likely that there would be a negative impact on any protected groups as a result of any service changes and if so to consider whether these can be mitigated or under the proposal should be changed or dropped.

Sustainability Implications

11. None

Other Material Implications

12. None

Appendices

- Appendix A – draft Corporate Plan and Budget 2023/24

Background Papers

- [Service and Financial Planning Guidelines for 2023/24 Cabinet 26th September 2022](#)
- [Draft Corporate Plan & Budget 2023/24 Consultation Process Report to Scrutiny Committee for Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing and Customer Service 9 November 2022](#)