

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-2026 Including Revenue Budget Submission 2023/24</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Thursday, 16 February 2023
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)**

To provide the Executive with the key revenue budget extract for 2023/24 of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023-2024 for submission to Council.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive:

- 1) recommend to Council that the Summary of Budget Movements (SOBM) be approved. (Appendix A);
- 2) note the report of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to Scrutiny of the Budget Setting Process 2023-24 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-2026 (as set out in Appendix B to the report);
- 3) approve the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix C to the report, to be effective from the dates listed on the schedule and the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix E in relation to the decision at Licensing and Appeals Committee;
- 4) to provide delegated authority for the Chief Finance Officer to draw funds from the Dedicated Schools Grant to support delivery of the Safety Valve Programme.
- 5) Note in relation to the capital programme, additional challenges have emerged in the secondary school places capital programme and are currently being worked through and will be reported to Executive in early 2023/24 to seek the necessary budget provision.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Members are presented with the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2023-2026 including the proposed revenue budget submission for 2022/23 for recommendation to Council. (Due to the size of this document a copy has been circulated separately to all Members. A copy can also be obtained from the Council's website or on request from Democratic Services).

Executive are requested to recommend the following key revenue budget extract of the MTFP to Council;

- Summary of Budget Movements 2023/24 (Appendix A)

Fees and Charges

Members are presented with the schedule of proposed fees and charges. In previous years, this has been presented to Executive in November. For consistency with the overall budget approval for 2023/24, the fees and charges approval has now been included in this paper.

Members are required to agree the fees and charges contained in this report at Appendix C, effectively from the dates shown on the schedule, of which most are enacted from the beginning of April 2023.

The Council is currently projecting significant financial pressures both in the current and future financial years. Implementation of the new fees and charges during the financial year will help the Council to offset this challenge and is considered to be responsible.

The report contains proposed charges for services as set out in Appendix C. Annual inflationary increases have in general been increased by an average 7% (and rounded where appropriate) this is below the Retail Price Index (RPI) of 12.3% as at July 2022 and seeks to balance financial pressures for the Council with residents financial ability to pay and access services. Some fees and charges, largely in Adults Social Services, vary according to the cost of providing the service.

Car parking charges, except for those for the Council's country parks, are not included in this report. Car parking charges are agreed and set through the Traffic Regulation Order making process, which requires that statutory provision for representation and objection are provided and the outcome determined through the Individual Executive Member Decision (IEMD) process. A list of charges for Council car parks can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/parking-and-transport/parking-and-permits/find-a-car-park/>

The Executive are asked to approve the schedule of fees and charges, as set out in Appendix E in relation to the decision at Licensing and Appeals Committee. At its meeting on 30 January 2023, the Licensing and Appeals Committee resolved that;

- 1) The Committee notes the proposed discretionary fees for 2023/24 set out at Appendix A as part of the Council's annual fee setting process, with the following amendments:

- a) The penalty for dog fouling be increased to £100
- b) The maximum fee for stray dog kennelling be increased to 7 days at £112

- 2) The Committee recommends to Executive that, in relation to those fees which are within the Council's discretion to set, the fees should follow best practice and ensure that the cost to the Council of administering, managing and enforcing the licensing regime is covered by the fee income. A copy of the report can be found at <https://wokingham.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MId=4300&Ver=4>

## BACKGROUND

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023-2026 will be presented to Council for approval on 16 February 2023. Executive are asked to recommend the following key revenue budget extract of the MTFP to Council.

- Summary of Budget Movements 2023/24 (Appendix A)

In considering the Council's revenue budget submission, members should be aware of the chief finance officer (CFO) report. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Finance Officer (Deputy Chief Executive) to report to Members as part of the budget setting process. The report highlights the key financial and service risks contained in the 2023/24 budget proposals. This was reported to January Executive and forms the first section of the MTFP.

The net revenue budget for 2023/24 is approximately £157m excluding capital and internal recharges. The Council needs to set a balanced budget in the context of this.

The budget requirements for 2024/25 and 2025/26 will be shown in the MTFP as indicative figures only

## Recommendation 4

The Executive are asked to approve delegated authority for the Chief Finance Officer to draw funds from the Dedicated Schools Grant to support delivery of the Safety Valve Programme. This delegation will include revenue and capital expenditure required to support the programme and will be in line with the plan submitted by the Council to the DfE.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	See MTFP	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	See MTFP (Indicative only)	No	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See MTFP (Indicative only)	No	Revenue

### Other Financial Information

None

### Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

The revenue budget submission represents the budget needed to deliver the strategic objectives and priorities of the Council.

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
A cumulative equality impact assessment has been undertaken on the budget and is detailed in Appendix D. The document provides detail of the overall context of budget changes as well as detail on specific changes and where further work will be required as those changes are progressed.

<b>Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i></b>
The MTFP includes budget allocation to deliver improvements in climate change.

<b>Reasons for considering the report in Part 2</b>
None

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appendix A – Summary of Budget Movements 2023/24</li> <li>- Appendix B – Report by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee's - Scrutiny of the Budget Setting Process 2023-24 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-26</li> <li>- Appendix C – Fees and Charges</li> <li>- Appendix D – Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment</li> <li>- Appendix E - Fees and Charges for Licensable Activity 202324</li> <li>- Medium Term Financial Plan 2023-2026</li> </ul>

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