

TITLE	Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-2027 Including Revenue Budget Submission 2024/25
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 22 February 2024
WARD	None Specific
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Finance - Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

To provide the Executive with the key revenue budget extract for 2024/25 of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024-2027 for submission to Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive:

- 1) recommend to Council the Summary of Budget Movements (Appendix A);
- 2) note the report of the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to Scrutiny of the Budget Setting Process 2024-25 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-2027 (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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members are presented with the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2024-2027 including the proposed revenue budget submission for 2024/27 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 2024/25 (Appendix A)

Fees and Charges

Members are required to agree the fees and charges contained in this report at Appendix C and Appendix E, effectively from the dates shown on the schedule, of which most are enacted from the beginning of April 2024.

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.

The report contains proposed charges for services as set out in Appendix C. Annual inflationary increases have in general been increased by an average 8% (and rounded where appropriate) this is below the Retail Price Index (RPI) of 8.9% as at September 2023 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.

BACKGROUND

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2024-2027 will be presented to Council for approval on 22 February 2024. Executive are asked to recommend the following key revenue budget extract of the MTFP to Council.

- Summary of Budget Movements 2024/25 (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 2024/25 budget proposals. A draft report was presented to January Executive and the final version forms the first section of the MTFP.

The net revenue budget for 2024/25 is approximately £172m excluding capital and internal recharges. The Council needs to set a balanced budget in the context of this.

The budget requirements for 2025/26 and 2026/27 will be shown in the MTFP as indicative figures only.

As part of the MTFP consideration, fees and charges are reviewed annually and included in Appendix C and E. An Equality Impact Assessment is also produced in Appendix D and a report from the chair of the overview and scrutiny committee in Appendix B.

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 online survey was available on the Council's engagement website from 2 October to 3 November 2023 and had 488 responses.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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.

Climate Emergency – *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*

The MTFP includes budget allocation to deliver improvements in climate change.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

None

List of Background Papers

- Appendix A – Summary of Budget Movements 2024/25
- Appendix B – Report by the Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s - Scrutiny of the Budget Setting Process 2024-25 and the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-27
- Appendix C – Fees and Charges
- Appendix D – Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment
- Appendix E – Fees and Charges for Licensable Activity
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-2027

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