



Extract from the minutes of the Worthing - Cabinet

WCAB/006/23-24 Budget Estimates 2024/25 and Setting of the 2024/25 Council Tax

The report before members was the final budget report of the year, the culmination of the annual budgeting exercise, and asked members to consider: final revenue estimates, an updated outline 5-year forecast and the provisional level of Council Tax for 2024/25 prior to its submission to Council for approval.

The report outlined the Worthing Cabinet specific decisions to be made with respect to areas such as fees and charges and the setting of council tax. It also included the Worthing Cabinet decisions on the shared services which were due to be reported to the Joint Strategic Committee for review at its meeting on 8th February as part of the Joint Services Budget. The report outlined the medium term financial challenge through to 2028/29 and described the key risks and assumptions which underpin this medium term financial view. The budget estimates reflected the council's priorities for 2024/25 and its focus on three key areas which underpin the council's vision of fair, green and local for Worthing: Clean, green, fair borough, Social housing, Town centre & seafront regeneration.

The major points raised within the report included:

- A full update on the impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement.
- Indicative funding for initiatives to support the councils' ambitions.
- Proposals to invest in services, Appendix 3, alongside outlined savings.
- Considerations to be taken by the cabinet as to whether to increase council tax by 2.99% or by a lower amount (section 5.10).

The budget was analysed by Cabinet Member portfolio. In addition, the draft estimates for 2024/25 had been prepared, as always, in accordance with the requirements of the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities (except in relation to pension costs adjustments that do not impact either on the Budget Requirement or the Council Tax Requirement).

The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had been informed that the referendum criteria for this year was an increase of £13.00 per Band D property which would be equivalent to an increase of 5.42%. The proposed 2024/25 budget was due to be considered by the Sussex Police and Crime Panel (PCP) on 26th January 2024. If the proposals were vetoed by the PCP, revised proposals would be

considered by the PCP on the 19th February 2024 at which point the PCC would be in a position to confirm their precept for setting the council tax for 2024/25 in time for Full Council on the 20th February 2024.

The draft Local Government Finance Settlement allowed councils to increase core council tax by up to 2.99%. Those councils with responsibility for Adult Social Care could increase council tax by up to a further 2%. Therefore a council tax increase of 4.99% for councils with social care responsibilities was allowed for 2024/25.

The precept for West Sussex County Council had not yet been finalised and would not be confirmed until 16th February 2024. The formal detailed resolution setting the overall council tax for the following year would be presented directly to the Full Council meeting on 20th February 2024.

The Cabinet took a recorded vote on the individual recommendations before it

For: - Councillors Cooper, Walker, Baxter, Cox, Garner, Taylor Beal, Turley, Wells and Whorlow.

Against: (0)

Abstentions: (0)

Decision

That the Cabinet

- a) Approved the proposals for savings outlined in Appendix 2;
- b) Approved the proposals to invest in services outlined in Appendix 3;
- c) Recommended that Full Council approve the use of capital receipts to support the delivery of the Organisation Design Programme and the budget as set out at Appendix 4;
- d) Recommended to Full Council the draft budgets for 2024/25 at Appendix 7 (broken down by cabinet member portfolio) and the transfer to reserves leading to a net budget requirement of £15,224,580, which includes provision for the proposals in Appendix 2 and 3, subject to any agreed amendments;
- e) Recommended to Council an increase of 2.99% in Council Tax, making Band D £267.66 per annum for Worthing Borough Council's requirements in 2024/25, as set out in paragraph 4.3;
- f) Approved the council tax base of 39,330.7 for 2024/25 as set out in paragraph 11.3.

(Link to the report on the website e.g. [Worthing Cabinet - 6th February 2024](#))