

Minutes of the Cabinet (Budget) Meeting held on 24 January 2024

Attendance	
Mark Deaville	Alan White (Chair)
Ian Parry	Philip White
Jonathan Price	David Williams
Mark Sutton	Victoria Wilson
Simon Tagg	

Cabinet Support Members in attendance: Paul Northcott and Robert Pritchard.

Apologies: Julia Jessel

Part One

86. Declarations of Interest in accordance with Standing Order 16

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

87. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029



"We are committed to Staffordshire as a place to create jobs and do business, as well as developing a sustainable future, with good schools, communities and open spaces where people can raise a family and enjoy a good quality of life.

Meeting the demands of today with planning for tomorrow remains a difficult task, but we are determined to succeed on our residents' behalf."

Alan White, Leader of the Council



"Despite the well-documented financial challenges facing local authorities, thanks to long-term planning, imaginative change, and careful management of our resources, this council remains financially stable.

It is that stability which allows us to meet our statutory responsibilities and also to look to the future by investing in our economy, infrastructure and communities".

	Ian Parry, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources
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Reasons for the Decision – To consider the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2024 - 2029 and the draft budget for 2024/25.

Decision - (a) That the updates to the financial plans, as set out in the report, be noted.

(b) That the comments of the Director of Finance on the adequacy of reserves and robustness of the budget be noted and that the County Council be asked to take note of these comments when considering the budget and council tax.

(c) That the recommendations of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted and Cabinet’s responses to those recommendations be approved.

(d) That it be recommended to the County Council on 8th February 2024 that they consider and approve the following:

- i. a net revenue budget of £666.671m for 2024/25;
- ii. planning forecasts for 2025/26 to 2028/29 as set out in Appendix 11 to the report;
- iii. a contingency provision of £15.000m for 2024/25;
- iv. a net contribution to reserves of £4.552m for 2024/25;
- v. a budget requirement of £671.223m for 2024/25;
- vi. a council tax requirement of £459.123m for 2024/25;
- vii. a council tax at Band D of £1,544.64 for 2024/25 which is an increase of 4.99% when compared with 2023/24;
- viii. This results in council tax for each category of dwelling as set out in the table below:

Category of Dwelling	Council Tax Rate £
Band A	1,029.76
Band B	1,201.39
Band C	1,373.01

Band D	1,544.64
Band E	1,887.89
Band F	2,231.15
Band G	2,574.40
Band H	3,089.28

ix. that the Director of Finance be authorised to sign precept notices on the billing authorities respectively liable for the total precept payable and that each notice states the total precept payable and the council tax in relation to each category of dwelling as calculated in accordance with statutory requirements;

x. the Financial Health Indicators set out in Appendix 10 to the report.

(e) That it be recommended to the County Council on 8th February 2024 that they consider and approve the following recommendations which are included within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2024/25, the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 and the Commercial Investment Strategy 2024/25 (Appendices 9a to 9c to the report):

- i. Approve the Minimum Revenue Policy for 2024/25 as contained within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2024/25 in Appendix 9a to the report;
- ii. Approve the Prudential Indicators as set out within the Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy 2024/25 at Appendix 9a to the report;
- iii. Approve the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy, based on the 2021 CIPFA Codes (Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code), and 2018 MHCLG (now DLUHC) Guidance (on Local Government Investments and on Minimum Revenue Provision);
- iv. Adopt the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) 2024/25 detailed in paragraphs 63 to 109 and Annex A and Annex B of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 (Appendix 9b to the report);
- v. Approve the policies on reviewing the strategy, the use of external advisors, investment management training and the use of financial derivatives as described in paragraphs 110 to 120 of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 (Appendix 9b to the report);

- vi. Approve the proposed borrowing strategy for the 2024/25 financial year detailed in paragraphs 41 to 62 of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 (Appendix 9b to the report);
- vii. The Treasury Management Strategy recommendations will operate within the prudential limits set out in Annex C of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 (Appendix 9b to the report) and will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Finance, with respect to decisions made for raising new long-term loans, early loan repayments and loan rescheduling;
- viii. Approve the Commercial Investment Strategy for 2024/25 (Appendix 9c to the report) and note the circumstances under which commercial investments can be made;
- ix. Approve the governance arrangements that are in place for proposing and approving commercial investments;
- x. Approve a maximum quantum for commercial investments of a further £20 million in 2024/25;
- xi. Approve a maximum limit for an individual service investment loan of £10 million in 2024/25;
- xii. Any upwards change in the amounts of the limits specified in recommendations x and xi above be delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.

(f) That the Director of Finance be authorised to adjust the contingency provision to reflect any grant and local taxation changes announced in the final 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement.

(g) That Cabinet Members and the Senior Leadership Team begin the process of identifying savings and service transformation to be incorporated into the budget at the appropriate time.

Leader of the Council