

Notice of:

EXECUTIVE

Decision Number:

EX12/2021

Relevant Officer:

Steve Thompson, Director of Resources

Relevant Cabinet Member:

Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council

Date of Meeting:

8 February 2021

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2021/22

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the proposal for Blackpool Council's draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 as outlined in the report circulated to Members under separate cover.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To recommend to Council the level of net expenditure for the draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 of **£149,062,000** (ref. paragraph 6.2).

2.2 To recommend to Council a level of budget savings of **£20.3m** (ref. paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 and Appendix 2).

2.3 To recommend to Council that the Chief Executive be authorised to take any necessary steps to ensure all staffing savings are achieved (ref. paragraph 8.1).

2.4 To recommend to Council that the target level of working balances remains at **£6m** (ref. paragraph 10.4).

2.5 To consider any further facts, information and stakeholder feedback which may emerge and report the details to the meeting of the Executive on 25th February 2021.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To enable progression to the next stage of the budget process.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council?

No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Not applicable - the report once approved will become the Council’s new approved budget.

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:
As outlined in the Budget report.

5.0 Council Priority:

5.1 The relevant Council Priorities are both:

“The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool”

“Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

6.0 Background Information

6.1 The purpose of this report is to determine the overall level of net expenditure to be included in the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2021/22 and to identify a budget savings plan that will ensure a balanced budget in-year.

6.2 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- Report
- Appendix 1- General Fund Budget
- Appendix 2- Savings Summary
- Appendix 3 – Equality Analysis
- Appendix 4 – Resident Budget Engagement
- Appendix 5 – Stakeholder Budget Engagement
- Appendix 6 – Report from Scrutiny Leadership Board Budget January 2021
- Appendix 7 - Assessment of Significant Financial Risks

(All circulated to members under separate cover)

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 As outlined in the Budget report, circulated to members under separate cover. Human Resources considerations are outlined in the budget report, circulated to members under separate cover.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk Management considerations:

10.1 As outlined in the Budget report circulated to members under separate cover. Appendix 7 forms an Assessment of Significant Financial Risks to Substantiate Target Level of Unearmarked Working Balances. As outlined in the Budget report, circulated to members under separate cover.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 As outlined in the Budget report, circulated to members under separate cover.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None directly from the report.

13.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

13.1 In line with last year's engagement the Council has undertaken two exercises to seek initial comments and ideas on the Budget, prior to more formal consultation on any proposals leading to significant service impacts or changes. The first was aimed at individual residents and staff, which received 1,629 engagements on Facebook leading to 290 responses (reference Appendix 4 – Resident Budget Engagement), whilst the second was aimed at stakeholder organisations and received 15 (reference Appendix 5 – Stakeholder Budget Engagement). The surveys, which were widely publicised via the Council's social media channels, included questions which asked for opinions about Council priorities and services at a broad level, but also sought comments on ways in which the Council could save or generate money. This year additional questions were included seeking views on the importance of the Climate Emergency and the Council's response to the Covid pandemic in the budget-setting process.

13.2 Consultation with the Trade Unions with regards to staffing issues has been embedded into normal working practices and has also met all formal consultation requirements.

13.3 The Scrutiny Leadership Board considered the key budget pressures, savings required and the budget engagement feedback at its informal meeting on 14 January 2021 and has produced a report attached at Appendix 6 for consideration by the Executive.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 Budget working papers.

14.2 Resident Budget Engagement – comments.
Stakeholder Budget Engagement – comments.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? Yes

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 28 January 2021 Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 Councillor Kirkland declared a prejudicial interest in decision 1 the nature of the interest being that she was a Council appointed non-Executive director of Blackpool Waste Services Limited trading as Enveco. Councillor Kirkland left the meeting for this part of the decision and took no part in the voting or discussion.

19.0 Executive decision:

19.1 The Executive resolved as follows:

1. To recommend to Council to agree the savings of £350,000 identified in Appendix 2 through Service improvements through the integration of Environmental and Cleansing services into Enveco (Blackpool Waste Services Limited).

(Councillor Kirkland having declared a prejudicial interest left the room during consideration of this decision.)

2. To recommend to Council the level of net expenditure for the draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22 of **£149,062,000** (ref. paragraph 6.2)
3. To recommend to Council a level of budget savings of **£19.95m (£20.3m minus £350,000 already approved in decision 1)** (ref. paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 and Appendix 2)
4. To recommend to Council that the Chief Executive be authorised to take any necessary steps to ensure all staffing savings are achieved (ref. paragraph 8.1)
5. To recommend to Council that the target level of working balances remains at **£6m** (ref. paragraph 10.4)
6. To consider any further facts, information and stakeholder feedback which may emerge and report the details to the meeting of the Executive on 25th February 2021.

20.0 Date of Decision:

20.1 8 February 2021

21.0 Reason(s) for decision:

21.1 To enable progression to the next stage of the budget process.

22.0 Date Decision published:

22.1 9 February 2021

23.0 Executive Members in attendance:

23.1 Councillor L Williams, in the Chair

Councillors Benson, Brookes, Campbell, Farrell, Hobson, Smith and Taylor

Councillor Kirkland having declared a prejudicial interest left the meeting for decision 1 and the voting and discussion thereon. Councillor Kirkland was present for decisions 2 to 6.

24.0 Call-in:

24.1

25.0 Notes:

25.1 Neil Adams, Branch Secretary Unison Blackpool Local Government branch made representations to the meeting. Mr Adams highlighted concerns about the review of the Council's equalities function which he believed had been linked to the savings outlined in Appendix 2. He emphasised the importance of such a function in addressing the needs of a diverse town and the previous commitments made by the Council.

In response, Councillor L Williams explained that the review had been proposed along with other services within the Resources directorate, no decisions had yet been made and the Trade Unions would obviously be part of such a review. She also emphasised the Council's continuing commitment to equality and diversity. She extended an invitation to Mr Adams to discuss the issue further in an appropriate meeting.