

Notice of:	EXECUTIVE
Decision Number:	EX8/2022
Relevant Officer:	Steve Thompson, Director of Resources
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2022

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the proposal for Blackpool Council's draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2022/23 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 2022/23 of **£160,276,000** (ref. paragraph 6.2)

2.2 To recommend to Council a level of budget savings of **£8.6m** (ref. paragraphs 7.1 and 7.4 and Appendix 2)

2.3 To recommend to Council that the Chief Executive be authorised to take any necessary steps to ensure any 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 24 February 2022.

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 2022/23 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 Proposals
Appendix 3 - Equality Analysis
Appendix 4 - Resident Budget Engagement
Appendix 5 - Stakeholder Budget Engagement
Appendix 6 - Report from Scrutiny Leadership Board Budget January 2022
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 to the Executive report forms an Assessment of Significant Financial Risks to Substantiate Target Level of Unearmarked Working Balances.

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 117 responses, whilst the second was aimed at stakeholder organisations and received 11 responses. The surveys were available online and as paper copies at front facing Council buildings and were widely publicised via the Council's social media channels.

The survey 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. In line with the previous year, views were sought on the importance of the Climate Emergency on the Council's 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 and savings required at its informal meeting on 19 January 2022 and has produced a report attached at Appendix 6 for consideration.

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: 26/2021

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 2022 Date approved: N/A

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1 Councillor Benson declared a personal interest, the nature of the interest being that her husband was employed by Blackpool Transport Limited. The company is not affected by the decision but reference is made in Appendix 2, to the Executive report, to a technical adjustment following the reversal of provision made for expenditure no longer necessary and to Concessionary Fares.

19.0 Summary of Discussion:

19.1 Mr Steve Thompson, Director of Resources, presented the report to the Executive. Mr Thompson emphasised the challenge in creating a recommendation on a balanced budget in doing so he drew members' attention to the resident and stakeholder engagement at Appendices 4 and 5 to the Executive report, and the report of the Scrutiny Leadership Board at Appendix 6 to the Executive report.

20.0 Executive decision:

20.1 The Executive resolved as follows:

1. To recommend to Council the level of net expenditure for the draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2022/23 of **£160,276,000** (ref. paragraph 6.2)
2. To recommend to Council a level of budget savings of **£8.6m** (ref. paragraphs 7.1 and 7.4 and Appendix 2)
3. To recommend to Council that the Chief Executive be authorised to take any necessary steps to ensure any staffing savings are achieved (ref. paragraph 8.1)
4. To recommend to Council that the target level of working balances remains at **£6m** (ref. paragraph 10.4)
5. To consider any further facts, information and stakeholder feedback which may emerge and report the details to the meeting of the Executive on 24 February 2022.

21.0 Date of Decision:

21.1 7 February 2022

22.0 Reason(s) for decision:

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

23.0 Date Decision published:

23.1 8 February 2022

24.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

24.1 The Executive considered the range of options outlined in the budget report but noted that the recommendation was best placed to deliver a balanced budget.

25.0 Executive Members present:

25.1 Councillor L Williams

Councillor Benson, Brookes and Taylor.

26.0 Call-in:

26.1

27.0 Notes:

27.1 The following non-Executive member was in attendance: Councillor Hunter.