

Dear Councillor

COUNCIL - MONDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2024

Please find attached, for consideration at the meeting of the Council on Monday, 26 February 2024, the following document that was unavailable when the agenda was published.

Agenda No Item

10. **Report of Cabinet - 21 February 2024 (Amendment) (Pages 3 - 8)**

Enclosed are the alternative budget proposals from the Liberal Democrat Group as presented by Cllr Malcolm Wade.

Yours sincerely

Kate Ryan
Chief Executive

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COUNCIL – 26 FEBRUARY 2024

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

1. PROPOSAL TO THE COUNCIL

1.1 That the proposed Portfolio Level amendments are approved and the relevant financial implications are brought into the budget for 2024/25 and MTFP:

- a) Community Safety and Wellbeing Portfolio
- b) Environment & sustainability Portfolio
- c) Finance & Corporate Portfolio
- d) Housing & Homelessness Portfolio
- e) Leader Updates Portfolio
- f) Planning & Economy Portfolio

2. PORTFOLIO LEVEL AMENDMENTS

2.1 The alternative budget uses the same figures prepared by Officers for the administration as the starting point, with the following areas of focus and financial amendments:

a) Community Safety & Wellbeing

Proposal	Resource Implication
Youth Hubs Seed Funding - Engage with partners and provide resource support for more youth and family hubs, with focus on school holidays, meals and funded activity throughout District.	£50,000 (Revenue)
ASCO Service - Feasibility study of funding in partnership with Town and Parish Council an ASCO service	Re-purpose £300,000 one-off budget
Reducing Child Poverty - Working with other agencies and providing a grant contribution aimed reducing child poverty in the New Forest District	£500,000 over 2 years (Revenue)
Arts Hub - Develop and formalise the Arts Advocate scheme working to have a minimum of one representative in each community with local arts and performance venue representation	Existing staff
Cllr Grants – whilst noting the administration’s plan to increase the overall community grants sum by £40,000, the alternative budget proposes individual councillor grant budgets be doubled to £1,200	Using £28,800 of the £40,000 MTFP increase

b) Environment & Sustainability

Proposal	Resource Implication
Solar Panelled Car Parks - Feasibility study into turning NFDC car parks into covered solar panelled to generate electricity for	£50,000 (Revenue)

charging electric vehicles and sell excess power to subsidise car parking costs	
Parking Clocks – reduction in price for 2025 based on 2023 base price + Sept '23 inflation + Sept '24 (assumed) inflation	Income reduction: £137,000 to 2024/25, £581,000 ongoing thereafter (Revenue)
Resultant alternative pricing tables can be seen at section 3 of this report.	

c) Finance & Corporate

Proposal	Resource Implication
Excess Space at ATC - expedite third party rental of under utilised office accommodation at Appletree Court	Existing Staff
Supporting Economy - encourage start ups by providing office or just space at a reasonable rent with facilities and Business Rate breaks	£100,000 (Revenue)
Business Rate relief - encourage the bringing back into use of vacant and empty shops through Business Rate relief incentives	Cap relief @£100,000 PA (Revenue)

d) Housing & Homelessness

Proposal	Resource Implication
Housing Supply - Working with developers to bring forward site identified in the local plan to increase all housing types	Existing Staff

e) Leader

Proposal	Resource Implication
Citizen Assemblies – investigating the forming of a citizen assembly	Existing Staff

f) Planning & Economy

Proposal	Resource Implication
Tourism Coordinator - working directly with Town and Parish Councils, tourism operators and Local History Groups to develop tourism infrastructure	Existing staff
Tourist App – develop and launch (self-funding)	Self-financing
Street Vending - NFDC to support food start-ups by providing strategic locations at a market rent for potential users to encourage the development of small business	Self-financing

3. PROPOSED CLOCK PRICING FOR 2025

TC Short Stay Clock	2023 Price	Increase	2024 Price	Assume 2024 inflation increase	2025 Price
Budget	£30	33.33%	£40	4.00%	£42
2025 - Alternative Price	£30	6.67%	£32	4.00%	£33
Price reduction in 2025					20%

District Wide Clock	2023 Price	Increase	2024 Price	Assume 2024 inflation increase	2025 Price
Budget Annual	£140	57.10%	£220	4.00%	£229
Budget Quarterly	£40	62.50%	£65	4.00%	£68
2025 - Alternative Price					
Annual	£140	6.67%	£149	4.00%	£155
Quarterly	£40	6.67%	£43	4.00%	£44
Annual Price reduction in 2025					32%
Quarterly Price reduction in 2025					34%

4. SUMMARY OF THE ALTERNATIVE BUDGET FUNDING PROPOSALS

4.1 Table 1 demonstrates the aggregate total of the proposed budget adjustments as above, and includes a summary on how these adjustments are to be funded:

Table 1 – Total Adjustments REVENUE

	One-off £	Ongoing £
PROPOSAL:		
- Youth Hubs Seed Funding	+ 50,000	
- Reducing Child Poverty	+ 500,000 (over 2 years)	
- Solar Panelled Car Parks	+ 50,000	
- Parking Clocks	+ 137,000 (to 24/25)	+ 581,000 (full year from 25/26)
- Supporting Economy		+ 100,000
- Business Rate Relief		+ 100,000
TOTAL:	+ 737,000	+ 781,000

FUNDING:		
- Equalisation Reserve	- 737,000 (over 2 years)	
- Reduction of GF contribution to Capital Programme		- 781,000
TOTAL:	- 737,000	- 781,000

- 4.2 The one-off revenue proposals require a total £737,000 contribution from the Council's Budget Equalisation Reserve over 2 years, which would still retain a sufficient balance to support the MTFP. We would supplement this reserve with yearend budgetary underspends, if they occur.
- 4.3 The ongoing revenue proposals require a total reduction in Revenue Contribution to supporting the Capital Programme of £781,000. This full figure would take effect from 2025/26, with a smaller reduction required in 2024/25 (£200,000), due to the timing of the proposed clock price reduction and the fact that clock prices are aligned to the calendar year, as opposed to financial year.
- 4.4 The Liberal Democrat budget would require the Council's Capital Programme to be self-financing, and not supported by a revenue budget contribution.
- 4.5 An alternative MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND ANNUAL BUDGET 2024/25 appendix 5A is presented with this proposal.

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023-2027

GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2024/25

	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
	Administration	Budget	Alternative
	Budget	Changes	Budget
PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS			
Community Safety and Wellbeing	3,468	+ 50 + 500	4,012
Environment and Sustainability	8,540	+ 50 + 137	9,290
Finance and Corporate	4,220	+100 + 100	4,420
Housing and Homelessness	3,499		3,499
Leader	1,174		1,174
Planning and Economy	3,997		3,997
	24,898	937	26,392
Reversal of Depreciation	-2,190		-2,190
Contribution to/(from) Earmarked Revenue Reserves	-410	-737	-1,147
Contribution to Reserves	0		0
NET PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS	22,298	200	22,498
Minimum Revenue Provision	2,269		2,269
Contribution to Capital Programme Financing (RCCO)	1,250	-200	1,050
Interest Costs	150		150
Interest Earnings	-1,432		-1,432
New Homes Bonus	-22		-22
GENERAL FUND NET BUDGET REQUIREMENTS	24,513	0	24,513
COUNCIL TAX CALCULATION			
Budget Requirement	24,513	0	24,513
Less:			
Settlement Funding Assessment			
Services Grant	-25		-25
Guarantee Grant (MHCLG)	-1,200		-1,200
Business Rates Baseline	-4,330		-4,330
	-5,555	0	-5,555
Locally Retained Business Rates	-4,320		-4,320
Budget Equalisation Reserve	0		0
Estimated Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit Business Rates	1,305		1,305
Estimated Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit Council Tax	-179		-179
Contribution from Business Rates Equalisation Reserve	-1,305		-1,305
COUNCIL TAX	14,459	0	14,459
TAX BASE NUMBER OF PROPERTIES	72,371.50		72,371.50
COUNCIL TAX PER BAND D PROPERTY	199.79		199.79
GENERAL FUND BALANCE 31 MARCH	3,000		3,000

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