

## Cabinet

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### EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2021 ONLINE.

#### 20 **Wiltshire Council's Budget**

Cllr Pauline Church, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement introduced the report which proposed the 2020/2021 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2020/2021 to 2024/2025 and set out the budget setting proposals, giving details that fed into the budget setting reports.

The Cabinet received a statement from Adrian Temple-Brown in relation to this agenda item. A copy of the statement is available to read in agenda supplement 2 on the Council's website [here](#).

Cllr Church reported that the process undertaken to consult on the Budget was open and transparent. She confirmed the budget timetable and confirmed that the budget papers had been discussed in detail with members at their briefing on 20 January 2021, the Financial Planning Task Group on 20 January 2021 and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 26 January 2021 prior to its consideration by the Cabinet and ultimately Council at the end of February 2021.

In presenting the report, Cllr Church indicated that despite it being an extraordinary year dealing with and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council's financial management and spending controls together with emergency funding from Government has seen a forecast balanced budget by the end of the 2020/21 financial year, placing the Council in a strong position going into 2021/22. The 2021/22 budget will ensure that vital services to the residents, businesses and communities of Wiltshire are continued to be provided during the pandemic and the recovery that will follow the emerging vaccine rollout. In recognition of this the Cabinet is proposing in this budget to set aside £1m a year over the life of the four year MTFS to aid recovery in Wiltshire's market towns.

Cllr Church commented further on (i) the Council tax and the Social Care Levy; (ii) significant service investment – Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Waste Services and Leisure; (iii) reserves; (iv) budget assumptions for future years.

Cllr Graham Wright, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, reported that the Committee met on 26 January 2021 to consider the Cabinet report. Robust Scrutiny was undertaken, and the Committee were satisfied with the updates and responses to questions received and supported the proposals in the report. The report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was published as an agenda Supplement.

Cllr Pip Ridout, Chair of the Financial Planning Task Group, reported that the Task Group met on 20 January 2021 to consider the Cabinet report. Many complex questions were raised and she thanked the Cllr Church and the Interim Corporate Director of Resources (S151 Officer) for summarising the critical issues and for the clarity and transparency of the budget papers.

**Resolved: To recommend that Council**

- 1. That a net general fund budget of 2021/22 of £412.561m is approved;**
- 2. That the Councils Tax requirement for the Council be set at £298.265m for 2021/22 with an average Band D of £1,590.60;**
- 3. That the Wiltshire Council element of the Council Tax be increased in 2021/22 by the following:**
  - i. A 1.99% general increase;**
  - ii. Plus a levy of 3% to be spent solely on Adult Social Care;**
- 4. That the Corporate Leadership Team be required to meet the revenue budget targets for each service area as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, for the delivery of Council services in 2021/22;**
- 5. Delegate changes in fees and charges as set out in the report;**
- 6. That the Capital Programme 2021/22 to 2029/30 is approved;**
- 7. That the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix 9 is adopted;**
- 8. That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2021/22 is set at £23.626m;**
- 9. That a 1.5% increase is set for social dwelling rents, except for rents currently over the formula rent which will be capped at formula rent as per national guidance;**
- 10. All service charges related to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) being increased to cover costs and garage rents increased by 1.5%;**
- 11. Endorses the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the forecast budget gap of £45.512m for the 2022/23 financial year with regular updates to be received on delivery against strategy and addressing the forecast budget gap.**

*Reason for decision:*

*To enable the Cabinet to recommend to Council a balanced revenue budget for the financial year 2021/22 and to set the level of Council Tax.*

*To enable effective, transparent decision making and ensure sound financial management as part of the Councils overall control environment.*

*The Cabinet also sets out the final assumptions being used in the budget for growth, inflation, demand for services, the estimated level of income from sales, fees and charges and the level of income estimated from core funding e.g. council tax, business rates and government grants and how all of these aspects have been impacted by COVID-19 pandemic as well as the level of reserves held and assessed by the Councils Section 151 Officer, as required, to provide future financial resilience.*

*This provides the Council with a MTFS to begin to drive long term financial sustainability, look towards recovery and continue to deliver on the Councils business plan.*