

8A. REFERRAL FROM CABINET – 25 JANUARY 2022 – REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (1) That Council note the position on the Collection Fund and how it will be funded.
- (2) That Council note the position relating to the General Fund balance and that due to the risks identified a minimum balance of £3.05 million is recommended.
- (3) That Council approves the savings and investments as detailed in Appendix B.
- (4) That Council approves a net expenditure budget of £18.123m, as detailed in Appendix C.
- (5) That Council approves a Council Tax increase of £5 on a Band D property (other bands with pro-rata increases). This is in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy and is equivalent to 2.08%.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: To ensure that all relevant factors are considered in arriving at a proposed budget and Council Tax level for 2022/23, to be considered by Full Council on 10 February 2022. To ensure that the budget is aligned to Council priorities for 2022/23 as set out in the Council Plan.

Councillor Ian Albert, Executive Member for Finance and IT, presented the report entitled Revenue Budget 2022/23 and gave an update including:

- There had been no specific questions or points from Finance, Audit and Risk Committee referral which had not been addressed at the Committee.
- Medium term funding remains uncertain, but hopeful this will become more certain in the early part of this year.
- Based on current forecasts around £1.5 million of additional net savings will need to be found, but this budget makes significant progress in setting the base of these savings.
- Budget allowance for 2022/23 and 2023/34 had included funds for dealing with the impact of Covid without government support and this could total £2.5 million across the two years.
- CIPFA resilience index had been circulated to Chief Financial Officers and a public version would be available shortly. The Service Director – Resources had advised that there was nothing included which would affect the current estimates in the report. An addendum to the Council report would be provided to include the details of this.
- This administration had stood up for change and this budget would help deliver a progressive Council plan, vital services and Climate Change agenda.
- This budget will help to protect services, such as swimming pools, which had been impacted by Covid.
- Council Tax increase would not be preferred, but it is needed following the lack of government support and the proposed rise is less than those proposed by Herts County Council and the Herts Police and Crime Commissioner.

Councillor Steve Jarvis noted that it was promised at Council that the petition regarding outdoor pools would be considered at this Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Ian Albert advised that he was looking to consider the arguments made by the petitioner and that it would be sensible for him and Cllr Jarvis to progress further discussions

with officers. There was unfortunately not enough time to produce something for this Cabinet meeting, but would try to produce something for the budget meeting in February.

Councillor Jarvis advised that he was happy to progress in this way and that impact assessments would need to be carried out and budgets explored to see what was possible.

Councillor Ian Albert proposed and Councillor Ruth Brown seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cabinet approved the decrease in the 2021/22 working budget of £111k, as detailed in Table 5.

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[Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 25th January, 2022, 7.30 pm - North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](http://north-herts.gov.uk)