

REPORT TO FINANCE COMMITTEE

DRAFT COMMITTEE BUDGET

Report Reference F-24-03
Meeting Date 9th September 2024
Agenda Item 9
Prepared by Town Clerk



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Each committee is required to set a draft budget for the financial year commencing 1st April 2025. All draft budgets will then be amalgamated and presented to a special meeting of the Finance Committee in December where the committee will agree a recommendation to Full Council for a budget and precept.

The draft budget is split into three sections covering the previous (2023/24) financial year, current financial year and the next financial year. The 2023 column shows actual spend against budget. The 2024 column shows the current budget (total), actual spend year to date, projected spend by year end and commitments. The 2025 column shows agreed (i.e. draft) budget; the ERM and carried forward columns are not used.

This report provides a summary of the changes within the cost centres.

2.0 COST CENTRE COMMENTARY

101 CENTRAL ADMIN

Following the placement of the council's current year funds into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund, and strong interest rates, the projected bank interest income is above budget. The 2025 figure assumes interest rates reduce to around 4% by the end of 2025.

The council does not include a budget for CIL income as it is not guaranteed and, due to statutory restrictions, does not impact the precept calculation. Any CIL income in the account at year end is committed to an earmarked reserve.

Internal and external audit fees are higher in current and next financial years due to the increased council turnover. Previous high inflation, which has uplifted assumed reinstatement valuations for assets, has resulted in higher insurance costs for the current year. Additionally, the council increased the level of fidelity guarantee insurance to reflect higher cash balances and the cost of legal expenses insurance has increased due to the end of a discounted scheme (which increased the premium by £168).

102 CIVIC

No significant changes.

103 FUNDED SERVICES AND LARGE GRANTS

There are no changes to most items in this centre, the exception being the grant to Knutsford Heritage Centre which is currently planned to reduce from £7,500 to £5,000 in the next financial year as part of the four year agreement.

A figure for the grant to The Welcome has been included for 2025/26 but it is noted this will be subject to determination by full council.

The Millennium Bursary has been increased by the latest inflation figures.

104 MAYOR'S CIVIC COSTS

The Mayoral Allowance has been increased in line with inflation. Civic cost and travel cost budgets have been reduced slightly for 2025 reflecting consistently lower activity since the pandemic, primarily with fewer out of area engagements. Current year civic regalia costs include the cost of an insurance revaluation of the chain and the planned *in memoria* engraving.

3.0 DECISION REQUIRED

The committee should agree a draft budget.