
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2021

HWSP.77/21 BUDGET 2022/23 - 2026/27

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources submitted the annual budget reports, noting that the Panel's consideration marked the beginning of the process for setting and approving the Council's Budget.

HWSP.78/21 BUDGET UPDATE - REVENUE ESTIMATES 2022/23 TO 2026/27

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources submitted report RD.46/21 providing a summary of the Council's revised revenue base estimates for 2021/22, together with base estimates for 2022/23 and forecasts up to 2026/27 for illustrative purposes. Potential new spending pressures, bids and savings had also been considered in the report. The Panel's agenda set out the matters which fell within the remit of the Panel.

The report set out known revisions to the MTFP projections, although there were a number of significant factors affecting the budget that were currently unresolved and which would be considered as the budget process progressed (paragraph 1.3 referred).

Details of the outstanding key issues and resource assumptions were set out at Section 4 and details of the income and budget monitoring shortfalls were documented at paragraph 5.7. Section 8 of the report set out the funding requirements for the Local Government Reorganisation.

The Executive had on 22 November 2021 (EX.128/21) received the report and resolved:

"That the Executive:

1. Noted the revised base estimates for 2021/22 and base estimates for 2022/23.
2. Noted the current Medium Term Financial Plan projections, which would continue to be updated throughout the budget process as key issues became clearer and decisions were taken.
3. Noted the initial budget pressures, bids and savings which needed to be taken into account as part of the 2022/23 budget process.
4. Noted the review of the earmarked reserves as outlined in paragraph 9 and Appendix F to Report RD.46/21."

In considering the report, Members raised the following questions and comments:

- Was the Council able to get the financial support it needed from government in relation to Covid 19

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources advised that the Council had received £1.8M funding in 2020/21 and £616,000 in 2021/22; the funding settlement for 2022/23 was expected to be announced in late December 2021.

- How was the Council addressing the Covid 19 impact on the Sands Centre Redevelopment Project?

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Council was currently in discussions on the matter with the contractor.

RESOLVED - That report RD.46/21 Budget Update - Revenue Estimates 2022/23 to 2026/27 had been submitted to the Panel.

HWSP.79/21 INDIVIDUAL CHARGES REVIEW - COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted report CS.37/21 setting out the proposed fees and charges for 2022/23 relating to those services falling within the Community Services Directorate. The report proposed a varied approach to the charges for the use of the city centre. To encourage the use of commercial pitches, pavement cafes and Farmers Markets it was proposed to maintain the rates at the current rate and the remainder of charges would increase by 3%. It was also proposed that 10p be added to all tariffs across all car parks and an increase of 10p per day to permit prices.

Details of the other proposed charges in relation to City Centre usage by external organisations; events; digital banner; Old Fire Station; allotments; use of parks; sports pitches; Talkin Tarn; Bereavement Services; Waste Services and Garage charges were also provided.

The original 2021/22 budgets and 2022/23 forecast income levels based upon the current charge structure and forecast volume were as detailed in the table in section 11 of the report. The charges highlighted within the report would result in an anticipated level of income of £2,810,500 against the MTFP target of £3,196,200. That represented a shortfall of £385,700 against the MTFP target.

The Executive had considered the report at their meeting on 22 November 2021 (EX.129/21 referred) and resolved:

"That the Executive:

1. Had reviewed the proposed charges as set out in the body of Report CS.37/21 and relevant appendices with effect from 1 April 2022, noting the impact those would have on income generation as detailed within the report.
2. Made the report of proposed charges available to relevant Scrutiny Panels for their review and comment."

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member commented that, in their view the £30 charge for streaming a funeral service was expensive.

The Health and Wellbeing Manager advised that the streaming service was provided by a third party who levied the charge, the Council had simply passed this on at cost. Benchmarking data with other Cumbrian local authorities indicated that the cost of the service was comparatively reasonable in Carlisle.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder stated that there were various reasons which may prevent a person attending a funeral service, he was of the view that the streaming charge was reasonable.

- What was the rationale for adding a further daily watersports permit charge at Talkin Tarn.

The Health and Wellbeing Manager responded that the existing charge applied to larger water craft, given the rise in popularity of paddleboarding it was felt that a new, smaller charge for paddleboarders was appropriate.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager responded to the question from the Chair on the use of electric vehicles in the Council's refuse and recycling fleet, noting that the Council's fleet comprised the most environmentally friendly vehicles (Euro 6). Replacing the largest vehicles in the fleet with electric alternatives was currently cost prohibitive.

RESOLVED - That the Panel had received the Individual Charges Review Community Services (CS.37/21).

HWSP.80/21 INDIVIDUAL CHARGES REVIEW - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Corporate Director of Economic Development submitted report ED.39/21 setting out the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Economic Development Directorate.

The proposed charges in relation to Planning Services included Development Control income; Building Control income; Building Control Discretionary Charges; Shop Mobility and Investment and Policy Income.

Acceptance of the charges highlighted within the report would result in an anticipated level of income of £656,000 against the Medium Term Financial Plan target of £656,000.

The Executive had considered the matter at their meeting on 22 November 2021 (EX.131/21) and resolved:

"That the Executive agreed the charges, for consultation, as set out in Report ED.39/21 and accompanying Appendices, with effect from 1 April 2022; noting the impact those would have on income generation as detailed within the report."

RESOLVED - That the Panel had received the Individual Charges Review - Economic Development (ED.39/21)

HWSP.81/21 INDIVIDUAL CHARGES - GOVERNANCE AND REGULATORY SERVICES

The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services submitted report GD.55/21 concerning the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Governance and Regulatory Services Directorate.

The report set out the proposed charges relative to Environmental Health and Housing; Homeless, Prevention and Accommodation Services; and Legal Services.

The introduction of the proposed charges was forecast to generate income of £802,800 in 2022/23 as summarised in the table at paragraph 5.11.1 of the report.

The Executive had considered the matter at their meeting on 22 November 2021 (EX.131/21 referred) and resolved:

"That the Executive agreed for consultation the charges as detailed within Report GD.55/21 and accompanying Appendices, with effect from 1 April 2022; noting the impact those would have on income generation as detailed within the report."

In response to a question from a Member regarding the competitiveness of the Pest Control Service with commercial providers and whether means testing had ever been considered for these services, the Principal Health and Housing Officer responded that the service was less costly than a number of other providers, means testing would not be cost effective to

implement.

RESOLVED - That the Panel had received the Individual Charges - Governance and Regulatory Services (GD.55/21).

HWSP.82/21 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 AND PROVISIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 TO 2026/27

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources submitted report RD.47/21 detailing the revised Capital Programme for 2021/22, now totalling £29,917,200, together with the proposed method of financing. The summary of the revised programme for 2021/22 showed a potential borrowing requirement in the sum of £28,794,905.

Also summarised was the proposed programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27 in the light of the new capital proposals identified, together with the estimated capital resources available to fund the programme.

The Executive had considered the matter at their meeting on 22 November 2021 (EX.133/21 referred) and resolved:

"That the Executive:

1. Noted the revised capital programme and relevant financing for 2021/22 as set out in Appendices A and B to Report RD.47/21 including approval of the reduction of £1,894,800 to the 2021/22 capital programme;
2. Had given initial consideration and views on the proposed capital spending for 2022/23 to 2026/27 given in the report in the light of the estimated available resources;
3. Noted that any capital scheme for which funding had been approved by Council may only proceed after a full report, including business case and financial appraisal, had been approved."

In response to a question from a Member regarding capacity at the Cemetery, the Deputy Chief Executive advised that it was reviewed on an annual basis.

RESOLVED - That the Panel had received the Revised Capital Programme 2021/22 and Provisional Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2026/27 (RD.47/21)