
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS AND TRANSFORMATION HELD ON 6 JANUARY 2022

BTSP.07/22 BUDGET 2022/23

(1) EXECUTIVE'S RESPONSE TO THE FIRST ROUND OF BUDGET SCRUTINY

Minutes of the special meeting of the Executive held on 13 December 2021 were submitted detailing the response of the Executive to the comments made by the Scrutiny Panels in response to the first round of Budget scrutiny.

RESOLVED - That the decisions of the Special Executive held on 13 December 2021 be received.

(2) EXECUTIVE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Executive's draft Budget proposals 2022/23 which had been issued for consultation purposes were submitted for scrutiny by the Panel.

The budget proposals were based on detailed proposals that had been considered by the Executive over the course of the last few months. In particular the reports of the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources which had been discussed at the Executive meeting on 13 December 2021.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources detailed a number of updates to the budget documents including the incorporation of recommendations from Scrutiny to freeze the City Council portion of Council Tax for 2022/23, freeze the first hour of car park charges and the review of the Talk Tarn car parking permits. She highlighted areas of reprofiling as well as outstanding items which would be incorporated into the budget for 19 January 2022 Executive meeting if available.

In considering the draft Budget proposals, Members raised the following questions and comments:

- Members noted the vacant properties within the Lanes and asked if the Council was liable for unpaid Business Rates and any losses that the Lanes may experience.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources agreed to provide the Panel with a written response.

- A Member highlighted the borrowing requirements in the report and asked if the Council would have to borrow the £1.6million required for the Local Government Reorganisation.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that there was no additional borrowing requirement for the £1.6million, it would be funded from the Operational Risk Reserve. She acknowledged that there was a significant borrowing requirement for the capital programme due to a lack of available capital grants. It was prudent to budget for the maximum requirement, however reviews of spending profiles and the cash position may reduce the actual borrowing required.

- A Member asked for clarity on the savings position.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources explained that the savings requirement had not increased and remained at £2million. It had been possible to reprofile the amount and

meet some savings on a non recurring basis but the saving requirement had moved to 2023/24. There was a savings strategy in place and the Council would continue to look for the savings to either achieve in 2022/23 or to inform the new authority.

- The saving strategy included service reviews which reviewed services not in line within the Councils core priorities or which were not statutory. How confident was the budget that it would not impact on the services offered to residents?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources highlighted previous work which had been undertaken to identify savings which did not impact on service provision, however, this work would need to be reviewed and updated. She clarified that this budget was based on the current service provision with no cuts to services. All budget pressures and savings had been identified by budget holders and Directors who knew if proposed savings would impact services. She reminded the Panel that £9million in savings had been achieved since 2010/11 without stopping any services.

- What did the Rural Services Grant cover?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources agreed to provide a written response.

- Had the cost of additional electric vehicle charging points been factored into the budget for the replacement of Council refuse vehicles with electric vehicles?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Panel that the Council could not currently replace their refuse vehicles with electric vehicles as there were no suitable options available. When it became a viable option additional electric charging points would be considered as a separate budget report which would set out all the funding options for the authority.

A Member commented that the replacement of electric vehicle batteries would also need to be considered as they could not be recycled. The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder responded that the lifetime of a battery would outweigh the time that a refuse vehicle would be in use with the authority as they were replaced regularly.

RESOLVED - That Corporate Director of Finance and Resources provided the Panel with a written response to the following:

- Was the Council was liable for unpaid Business Rates and any losses that the Lanes may experience.
- What the Rural Services Grants covered.