

Report of the Chief Officer – Financial Services

Report to Council

Date: 24th February 2021

Subject: Robustness of the Revenue budget 2021/22

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides Members of Council with comments on the robustness of the proposals contained in the various party amendments to the budget motion.
- 1.2. In particular it focuses upon scenarios whereby a number of amendments could be agreed by Council and the extent to which these amendments from different parties could be inter-related.

2. Robustness of the budget

- 2.1 The Local Government Act (Part II) 2003 places a requirement on the Council that when making decisions on the setting of the council's budget and the council tax, they must consider a report from the council's statutory finance officer (the Chief Officer - Financial Services) on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves within the proposals. The report of the Chief Officer – Financial Services at item 8(i) on the council summons includes at section 11 comments to this effect in respect of the proposed budget motion.
- 2.2. Given this requirement, in considering any proposed amendment to the budget motion, members must also consider the comments of the Chief Officer – Financial Services on the impact of any amendment upon the robustness of the budget and adequacy of reserves. Individual budget robustness reports for each party's budget amendments have been produced and these accompany the amendments which are

to be considered at Council on the 24th February 2021. It has also now been identified that a number of the proposed amendments from different parties are inter-related, which members of Council need to be aware of in considering the various budget amendments. As such the comments in this report supplement those contained in the main report and those included in budget robustness reports for each party's amendments.

3. Proposed amendments

3.1 There are a number of amendments which are proposing to reduce the same budget which, if all agreed, would be in excess of the available budgetary provision in the 2021/22 budget.

3.2 The proposed 2021/22 budget contains £0.744m for Member's Special Responsibility Allowances. For the purpose of implementing these amendments, a six month timescale has been assumed and this reduces the level of budgetary provision down from £0.744m to £0.372m. The following amendments all propose reducing this budget.

- Amendment 32 in the name of Councillor Finnigan assumes the use of £0.231m from Member's Special Responsibility Allowances for the purpose detailed in the amendment.
- Amendment 37 in the name of Councillor Blackburn assumes the use of £0.208m from Member's Special Responsibility Allowances for the purposes detailed in the amendment.

The cumulative value of these proposed reductions in the budget for 2021/22 is £0.439m, which is in excess of the available provision of £0.372m. As detailed in both the Morley Borough Independents and Green Party robustness reports any variation in respect of Members' allowances are made by the Independent Remuneration Panel and therefore before any proposed reduction could be implemented the Council would first have to consult with this panel.

3.3 Amendment 6 in the name of Councillor Carter, amendment 25 in the name of Councillor Golton and amendment 32 in the name of Councillor Finnigan all assume savings from a reduction in the funding for full-time Trade Union Convenors. Cumulatively these amendments represent a reduction of £0.933m in spend on full-time Trade Union Convenors which is in excess of the available budget.

3.4 Amendment 2 in the name of Councillor Carter and amendments 21, 23 and 25 in the name of Councillor Golton all assume a saving in the budgeted contribution to the Investment reserve. Cumulatively these amendments represent a reduction of £1.218m which is in excess of the available budget.

3.5 Amendment 5 in the name of Councillor Carter and amendment 23 in the name of Councillor Golton both assume a saving in the budgeted contribution to the Innovation reserve. Cumulatively these amendments represent a reduction of £0.718m which is in excess of the available budget.

3.6 There are then a number of budget amendments which are proposing similar changes to the budget, either increasing expenditure or reducing income, but varying in how the proposed change is funded. All are detailed in the table below:

A reduction in Leeds 2023 costs	Amendment 1 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendment 25 in the name of Councillor Golton Amendments 36 and 37 in the name of Councillor Blackburn
Members Special Responsibilities Allowances	Amendment 32 in the name of Councillor Finnigan Amendment 38 in the name of Councillor Blackburn
A reduction in respect of Trade Union convenors	Amendment 6 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendment 25 in the name of Councillor Golton Amendment 32 in the name of Councillor Finnigan
A reduction in contributions to the Investment earmarked reserve	Amendment 2 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendments 21, 23 and 25 in the name of Councillor Golton
A reduction in contributions to the Strategic Contingency earmarked reserve	Amendments 2, 9 and 10 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendments 23 and 31 in the name of Councillor Golton
A reduction in contributions to the Innovation earmarked reserve	Amendment 5 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendment 23 in the name of Councillor Golton
Cessation of charges for the disposal of bulky waste	Amendment 5 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendment 33 in the name of Councillor Dobson Amendment 36 in the name of Councillor Blackburn
To reverse closure of West Leeds Country Park Visitor Centre	Amendment 7 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendment 37 in the name of Councillor Blackburn
Cessation of charges for the disposal of inert waste	Amendment 23 in the name of Councillor Golton Amendment 38 in the name of Councillor Blackburn
Cessation of charges for replacement black and brown bins	Amendment 23 in the name of Councillor Golton Amendment 38 in the name of Councillor Blackburn
To reverse planned reduction in budget for Neighbourhood Networks	Amendment 4 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendment 38 in the name of Councillor Blackburn
Retention of additional PCSOs	Amendment 1 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendment 25 in the name of Councillor Golton
To provide one year's running costs for ASC homes	Amendment 6 in the name of Councillor Carter Amendment 28 in the name of Councillor Golton

4. Overall conclusion

- 4.1 In conclusion, as identified above there are a number of proposed amendments to the budget motion which are inter-related, which members of Council need to be aware of in considering the 2021/22 budget.