

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Finance) (Introduced by Executive Member (Resources))	Council	Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Revenue Budget 2024/25, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme 2024-2027

Is this report confidential?	No
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Purpose of the Report

- To seek approval of the Executive's Budget Strategy and proposals for the Revenue Budget 2024/25, together with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Capital Programme for 2024-2027.

Recommendations

- The Executive recommends that Council:
 - Approve the budget and proposals set out in this report, including the level of Council Tax as set out in the Formal Council Tax Resolution for 2024/25, including Special Expenses & Parish Precepts, at **Appendix A**;
 - Note the advice of the Chief Finance Officer in relation to the robustness of the estimates within the overall budget, including the risks contained within it and the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves, as set out in the Statutory Report at **Appendices B1 – B3**;
 - Approve the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at **Appendix C**;
 - Note the council's forecast Cumulative Budget Deficit and Budget Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27 at **Appendix D**, including the analysis of the movement in the 2024/25 Budget from the position approved by Council in February 2023;
 - Note the analysis of the Directorate Budgets for 2024/25, by expense type, at **Appendix E**;
 - Approve the capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 (**Appendices F1, F2 & F3**);
 - Approve the Capital Strategy at **Appendix G**;

- h) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy at **Appendix H1** and note the advice of the treasury management consultants at **Appendix H2**;
- i) Approve the council's Pay Policy at **Appendix I** for publication on the council's website from April 2024 (including Appendix I (i) – the paycales for Chorley Council and Appendix I (ii) – the paycales for Shared Services);
- j) Note the Budget Consultation 2024/25 Report at **Appendix J**;
- k) Note the Impact Assessment of the Budget Proposals for 2024/25 at **Appendix K**.

Reasons for recommendations

- 3. To ensure that the council complies with the statutory requirement to set a balanced budget for 2024/25.

Other options considered and rejected

- 4. None considered; setting the budget is a statutory requirement.

Executive summary

- 5. This 2024/25 budget and the MTFs for the next 2 years have been updated to take account of the Local Government Finance Settlement announced on 5 February 2024 and the latest financial information, forecasts and economic outlook, and are reflective of the following:
 - due to the continued pressures on council budgets, alongside reduced levels of funding from government to meet these increasing costs, the figures include a proposed 2.99% increase in council tax in 2024/25;
 - the figures include a proposed 1.99% increase in council tax in 2025/26 and of 1.99% in 2026/27; these proposals will be revisited each year as part of the budget setting process and will be dependent upon the outcome of the government's reviews of both the future funding framework and the future distribution of funding between councils (i.e. the long awaited Fair Funding Review), the review of the business rates system and the development of the 'Levelling-Up' agenda;
 - continued investment is reflected in ongoing revenue budgets to ensure delivery of corporate strategy priorities.
- 6. Although the level of funding in cash terms has decreased by £0.8m (4.5%) from £17.6m in 2016/17 to £16.8m in 2024/25, there has been a further real terms reduction as the rate of inflation (as measured by CPI) has increased by 31.9% over this period. Despite this, the council has been, and remains, ambitious in its approach to addressing the budget deficit by generating efficiency savings and additional income.
- 7. The budget is set to ensure that the objectives of the council's Corporate Strategy priorities are met.
- 8. The council continues to invest in the borough and this budget includes £22.450m of capital investment from 2024/25 to 2026/27. This includes investment in:

- the provision of affordable housing, support for refugees and adaptations to assist residents in their homes;
- improving and transforming the leisure centres to encourage our residents to be active and healthy, along with investment in play, recreation and open spaces;
- driving economic development through the delivery of the Woodlands development site;
- supporting our town centre through the town centre masterplan and the recently awarded Levelling-Up Fund, for which plans are currently being developed;
- delivering the green agenda, including decarbonisation of council properties;
- rationalisation of council accommodation, including relocation of the Bengal St depot and works to the Town Hall and the former White Hart public house;
- investment in a programme of refurbishment and replacement of bus shelters across the borough through the Asset Improvement programme.

The council will continue its success of investing in assets that benefit residents and businesses whilst also generating a net income to the council.

Corporate priorities

9. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

10. The Executive Cabinet agreed the '2024/25 Draft Budget' report at their meeting on 18 January 2024; a budget consultation then followed. The report set out the Executive's intention for spending and investment in the borough over the course of the 2024/25 financial year.

Budget Consultation Results

11. Consultation on the 2024/25 budget ran from the 19 January to 1 February 2024. The consultation was publicised through Council channels, including the council website and social media pages; details of the consultation are set out at **Appendix J**.
12. The formal consultation received 148 responses through an open question format, via an online survey.
13. As well as completing the online survey, respondents also shared their views and comments using social media. From across all the posts during the budget consultation period on Facebook, the posts were viewed 28,300 times, and on X, the posts reached 18,777. Analysis of social media responses have been grouped alongside the consultation responses.

14. The responses have been collated and analysed to identify the main themes and then grouped together based on whether they indicated a positive or negative response to the proposals.
15. The following table outlines the distribution of positive, neutral, and negative responses to the open question which asked for comments on the overall proposals. The majority of responses were either positive (expressing agreement with the budget proposals) or neutral (neither agreeing or disagreeing with the budget proposals, for example suggesting additional priorities/areas of investment).

Status	%
Positive or neutral view of the proposals	84.75%
Negative view of the proposals	15.25%

16. The majority of positive comments (27%) showed either general support for the proposals or particular support for proposals to improve parks and green spaces in the borough (27%). There was also support for the other areas of investment including the general investments proposed by the council (18%), plans to improve the visitor offer and tourism (18%), and housing and homelessness (9%).
17. The majority of negative comments (47%) relate to feedback suggesting that there should not be an increase in council tax, with 14% of negative comments relating to Waste and Streetscene and the proposal to increase the cost for the optional garden waste collection service, and 32% of these comments relating to general investment, particularly investment in bus shelters, high cost projects and general spending.

2024/25 Budget Development

18. The budget has been developed in line with the achievements, decisions and actions taken by the council to date. Despite the difficult financial position and cost pressures faced, reflecting high inflation, increased utility costs and interest rates, along with the uncertainty around future Government funding, the council is committed to delivering on the agreed priorities and the budget reflects this commitment.
19. The key components of the 2024/25 Budget and MTFs, and the assumptions and information on which this is based, are detailed in this report and the supporting appendices.
20. The key factor in the development of the 2024/25 Budget, and in the MTFs for the following 2 years, is the Local Government Finance Settlement; through this, Government sets out the funding it will make available to local authorities, along with the parameters within which other sources of income, i.e. Council Tax and Business Rates, can be raised.
21. The fact that yet again we have only received a one year settlement has exacerbated the risk in our financial planning; in the absence of any figures or framework from Government, it is almost impossible to prepare a credible financial strategy beyond 31 March 2025 with any degree of confidence in the underlying assumptions. Uncertainty prevails in respect of the development and implementation of a new Fair Funding

Review and changes to the Business Rates Retention Scheme; it is within this financial context that we have developed the MTFS.

2024/25 Budget Summary

22. The 2024/25 Budget and MTFS covering the period 2025/26 and 2026/27 is set out in **Appendix D**. A summary of the financial position is as follows:

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2025/26 £m
Council Tax (including Collection Fund adjustments)	(8.058)	(8.298)	(8.508)
Retained Business Rates (including the Business Rates Pool)	(6.870)	(7.152)	(7.152)
Services Grant	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
Revenue Support Grant	(0.127)	(0.127)	(0.127)
Minimum Funding Guarantee	(1.624)	(1.650)	(1.650)
New Home Bonus	(0.141)	(0.141)	(0.141)
Total Funding	(16.839)	(17.387)	(17.597)

Total Expenditure	16.839	18.134	18.928
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Budget (Surplus) / Deficit	-	0.747	1.331
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23. The key elements of the figures are outlined in more detail below.

2024/25 Budget – Funding Sources

Local Government Finance Settlement

24. The lack of clarity around the council's future funding streams, and a further one-year financial settlement for 2024/25 rather than the expected multi-year settlement, frustrates financial planning beyond one year, however for the 2024/25 Budget, the figures are based on the Final Local Government Finance Settlement that was published on 5 February 2024.

Business Rates

25. The Settlement confirmed that the Lancashire Business Rates Pool will continue in 2024/25 but no mention was made as to the future of this in 2025/26. Chorley Council benefits from additional business rates income of approximately £1.2m per annum as a result of being a member of the pool. In the absence of any further information regarding Business Rates Retention reform, the pool is assumed to continue throughout the period of the MTFs.

New Homes Bonus

26. New Homes Bonus was introduced in 2011 as a stimulus for the provision of new homes and is a non-ringfenced grant, distributed between local authorities based upon new growth in housing provision in their area. The length of time that the bonus is paid for each new home built has reduced from 6 years when it was first introduced, down to 5 years with effect from 2017/18, then 4 years from 2018/19 and then since 2020/21 it has been limited to a one-off annual payment. Whilst it had been announced that funding from New Home Bonus (NHB) would be discontinued, the Settlement announced an allocation of £0.141m for 2024/25 (2023/24 - £0.297m). For the purposes of the MTFs, it is assumed that NHB will continue at its 2024/25 level, or will be re-purposed as a grant, or subsumed within another grant at the same value.

Council Tax

27. The Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed a council tax increase limit for district councils in 2024/25 of up to 3% or £5 (whichever is the greater) on a Band D equivalent in 2024/25. This had already been confirmed in the Settlement for 2023/24 and an increase of 2.99% had already been incorporated into the MTFs for the year. The Government assumes the maximum level of Council Tax rise when calculating their assumptions on the Council's Core Spending Power which informs how much the Council receives in government grants.
28. Despite the continued pressures on council expenditure budgets, including the impact of high inflation and increased utility costs, combined with the real terms reduction in Government funding provided to the council since 2010, it is recommended to limit the increase to Chorley residents to 2.99% in 2024/25 as previously proposed.
29. The Settlement for 2024/25 has however remained silent on the limits for council tax increases for 2025/26. The MTFs now presented to Finance Council, assumes an increase of 1.99% in both 2025/26 and 2026/27. The 2025/26 position will be revisited next year as part of the budget setting process and will be subject to future decision dependent on the outcome of future Government funding announcements.

Minimum Funding Guarantee

30. The grant, introduced in 2023/24, replaced the Lower Tier Services Grant and a proportion of the previous funding provided by New Homes Bonus legacy payments; it is intended to provide a funding floor for all local authorities so that no authority will see an increase in Core Spending Power of less than 4% (before any assumption on council tax rate increases, but after increases in the council tax base are applied). In 2023/24 this figure was 3%. The council has been allocated £1.624m (23/24 -

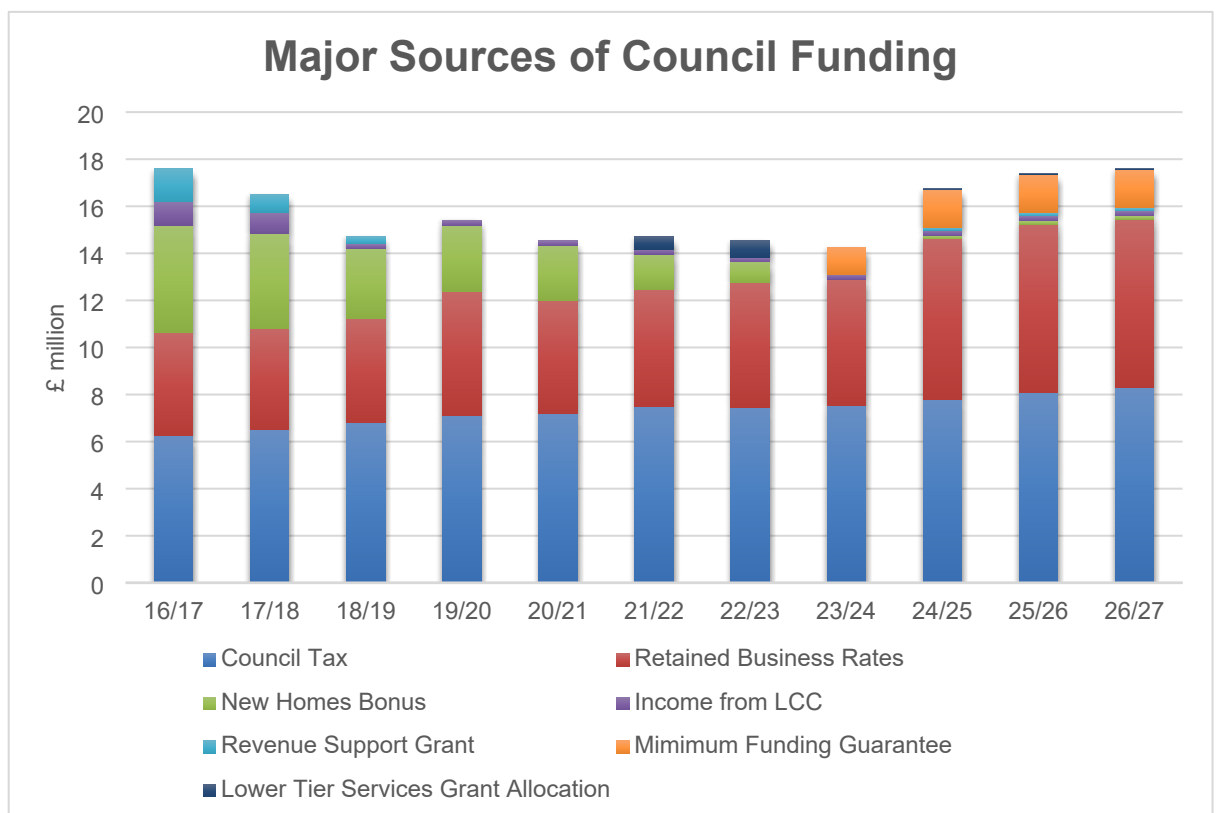
£1.146m) in the Settlement for this in 2024/25. Given that the grant is based on, and is subsumed within the council's Core Spending Power, and that this figure is reported for all authorities across the country each year within the Settlement as a measure of growth in the funding by Government, it is unlikely that this will reduce; as such it has been assumed that this grant will continue into 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Services Grant

31. The council will receive £0.019m in 2024/25 (23/24 - £0.119m). Previously described as a 'one-off' grant in 2022/23 (£0.203m), although allocated again in 2023/24 and 2024/25, it is unclear what will happen to the grant in 2025/26. For budgeting purposes it has been assumed it will continue in some form, and as such, income of £0.019m is assumed in 2025/26 and 2026/27.

Summary of Major Sources of Council Funding

32. The chart below outlines the forecast level of funding for the council across the next three years in comparison to previous allocations.
33. As the government has only published a one-year settlement, assumptions have been made, as noted above, that the NHB together with the Services Grant and the Minimum Funding Grant will also continue at their 2024/25 level.
34. As the graph shows, funding to Chorley Council has remained static from £17.6m in 2016/17 to a forecast of £17.6m by 2026/27.



2024/25 Budget - Expenditure

Pay Award

35. At the time the 2023/24 Budget was approved, the negotiations for 2022/23 had yet to conclude and no fixed point in time had been announced for the determination of the 2023/24 pay award. As such, a provision of 5% was included in the pay budget for 2023/24, which equated to approximately £652k per year. A pay award was agreed in November 2023 of £1,925 per whole time equivalent, for which no additional funding was provided. The increase in costs over and above the budget provided, equated to approximately £146k which presents a recurring cost pressure in 2024/25 and beyond.
36. Given the increases in inflation over the course of 2022 and 2023, and the forecasts moving forward, the pay award assumption for 2024/25 has been reviewed and this has been retained at 5% in line with the MTFS approved by Council in February 2023. The assumptions for 2025/26 and 2026/27 have been included in the MTFS at 2% for each year reflecting the forecast reduction in inflation.
37. The National Living Wage will rise from £10.42 for workers aged 23 and over, to £11.44 for workers aged 21 and over from April 2024. This will not affect Chorley Council's pay bands for 2024/25 as the council pays above this level already.

Pension

38. The results of the Lancashire County Pension Fund triennial actuarial valuation of 2022 identified that the fund had had a strong performance over the 3 years through to 31st March 2022, however since then, with the volatility in global financial markets, inflation and interest rates, the position has been more turbulent. Overall, the Chorley Council section of the fund saw a reduction in the financial contributions required over the period 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26, comprising;
 - an increase in the level of Employer Pension Contribution rates from 16.4% to 18.3% for the 3 years covered (a 1% increase results in approx. £115k of cost, i.e. an annual increase therefore of approximately £218k) offset by;
 - a reduction in the annual cost of the fund deficit repayment from £467k per annum to £0 in each of the 3 years.
39. Overall, the actuarial valuation has reduced the council's pension costs by approximately £249k compared to the rates paid in 2022/23.

Inflation and Increases in Cost of Utilities

40. CPI rose by 6.7% in the 12 months to September 2023, down from 10.4% in February 2023 when the 2023/24 Budget and MTFS were approved. Headline inflation is now 4% compared with its 2022 peak of more than 11%. The Bank of England forecast is that CPI will fall temporarily to around 2% in mid-2024, before increasing slightly up to 3% over the remainder of the year.

41. Inflationary uplifts to budgets are only provided on contracts where such uplifts are specific and contractually agreed; for other non-pay budgets, budget holders are expected to manage and absorb any additional costs in this regard, For utilities, provision has been made in the budgets in line with the forecasts provided by utility specialist advisors.
42. The council will continue to support its wholly owned leisure services company in response to the high cost of utilities and the impact of the cost of living crisis on the level of income generated, on the basis that any intervention will reduce over time as the company develops its services to fully cover its own costs.

Forecast outturn 2023/24

43. The latest Revenue Monitoring report for Quarter 3 - the 9 months to 31st December 2023, is forecasting an overspend for the 2023/24 financial year of £0.780m. This relates to many different factors including the unfunded, nationally negotiated pay award of £1,925 per whole time member of staff, compared to the budgeted provision of 5%, together with slippage and one-off pressures on some of the council's major projects/investments, additional costs within the Property Team and the Events Team, offset by higher than expected returns on cash investments, underspends, the use of reserves and additional grant funding secured to support operational service delivery. The position continues to be refined as we progress through the final quarter of the year.

Additional Investment in Corporate Priorities

44. The council continues to invest in delivering the ambitions set out in its Corporate Strategy and to ensure that it delivers high quality services to its residents. The key areas of investment are set out on the following pages.

Investment in 2023/24

45. The council allocates significant revenue and capital investment to deliver corporate strategy priorities through a programme of diverse activities. In 2023/24 these activities were designed to progress action to address the economic impact of the pandemic including support for businesses and activity to increase jobs and skills, establishing key assets for the future and to respond to the needs of communities by enhancing essential services and facilities;

Housing where residents can live well

- Completion of the **£17.1m** investment in Tatton Gardens, providing vital amenities for local residents, including improved health care provision delivered through an onsite GP surgery and pharmacy, assisted living accommodation units and recreation ground improvements, supporting wellbeing outcomes and wider benefits such as community cohesion and reduced anti-social behaviour.

- **£110k** investment in a two-year home energy programme that has been developed to provide energy advice and practical support to install energy saving measures and to support residents with the increasing cost of energy. In collaboration with partners, the scheme offers visits to households who are vulnerable, or in fuel poverty, to undertake a home energy audit and provides advice on energy efficiency measures; this is linked to the existing council-based services.

A green and sustainable borough

- Investment of **£105k** was identified in 2023/24 to implement the first stage of the bus shelter improvement plan developed during the year, as part of the council's commitment to improving public transport networks. The five-year programme covers replacement of 83 bus shelters. The replacement of the shelters will seek to encourage the use of public transport by transforming bus stops into modern, safe, and inviting spaces that all residents throughout the borough can utilise.
- To address the challenge of rising energy costs for businesses, and to contribute to the council's carbon neutral ambitions, a **£130k** package of support was launched offering grants that can support energy efficiency measures and adaptations. The scheme provides a grant of up to £2,000 towards the costs of purchasing energy reduction equipment identified by free certified energy audits.

An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas

- Completion of the **£11.4m** investment in the Strawberry Meadows Business Park. This state-of-the-art facility, will enable the council to continue attracting people to do business in Chorley.
- **£100k** investment to promote future career pathways and to provide a local skills pipeline. The comprehensive Skills and Jobs Programme for Chorley will allow aspiring local businesses to stay and grow in the borough.

Healthy, safe and engaged communities

- The **£715k** investment in the Cost of Living Action Plan continues to deliver a range of activities that support residents with pressures in the cost of food and energy. The Warm Spaces Programme was expanded to cover the summer months and the Welcome Spaces Programme, supporting residents to access cost of living support alongside social inclusion activity. The Household Support Fund Phase 3 was completed in the year, with 6,744 households being supported financially to a total value of £426k.
- **£400k** investment to help support specific challenges in rural areas by offering a rural grants scheme to enable eligible businesses to make capital improvements to their business. The scheme was launched in September 2023 for rural businesses across the borough to apply for grant funding.

Investment in Priorities 2024/25

46. The council has invested in services and delivered positive outcomes for residents.

47. In continuing to do so, and following the refresh of the Corporate Strategy in November 2023, from across the capital programme, revenue budgets and specific ear-marked reserves, this budget will invest in activity that will continue to drive forward priorities and key projects to achieve the vision for Chorley to have strong communities, a resilient economy, excellent services and a greener future.

Housing where residents can live well

- **£56k** investment to improve housing standards across the borough and prevent homelessness.
- **£132k** investment to deliver the Local Plan

A green and sustainable borough

- **£353k** investment to continue delivering improvements to Chorley's Bus Shelter Network.
- **£2.0m** investment in parks and open spaces, which will assist in increasing the number of parks with a Green Flag Status.

An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas

- **£45k** investment to encourage more visitors to the borough, and to improve the visitor offer and the economy.
- **£25k** investment to focus on the future growth of Chorley's economy.

Healthy, safe and engaged communities

- **£315k** investment to launch an enhanced social prescribing service focussed on supporting family and early years.
- **£117k** investment to deliver a Health and Wellbeing Programme to support the needs of residents across the borough.

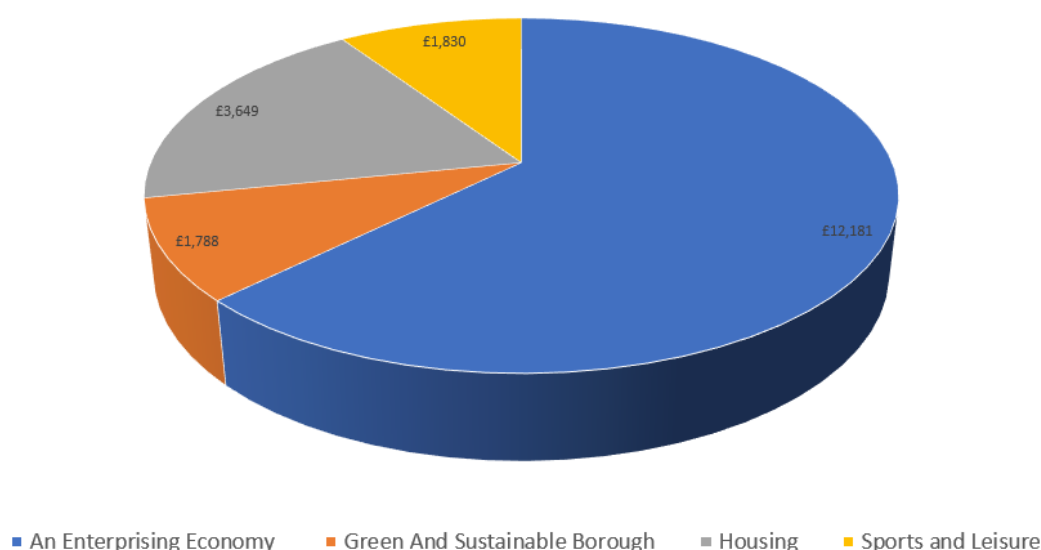
Medium Term Financial Planning

48. Despite the increases in funding and budget savings identified in this report, there remain large forecast budget deficits of £0.747m in 2025/26 and £1.331m in 2026/27. The council's medium-term plans to reduce the budget deficits are outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27 at **Appendix C**.
49. The council's medium-term plan to reduce the budget deficit beyond 2024/25 will be refined and developed over the coming months, and will be subject to future funding announcements, the wider economic environment and other assumptions (e.g. future pay awards), which may change over the period. The main strands of the strategy that could generate savings and income are also outlined within **Appendix C**.

Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2026/27

50. Details of the capital programme, including new capital investment, are outlined in **Appendix G1**. The capital programme for 2024/25 to 2026/27 totals **£22.450m** and is an indication of how ambitious the council is in delivering its Corporate Strategy and the priorities within it.
51. A breakdown of the capital programme in 2024/25 is detailed below:

2024/25 Budgeted Capital Spend £'000

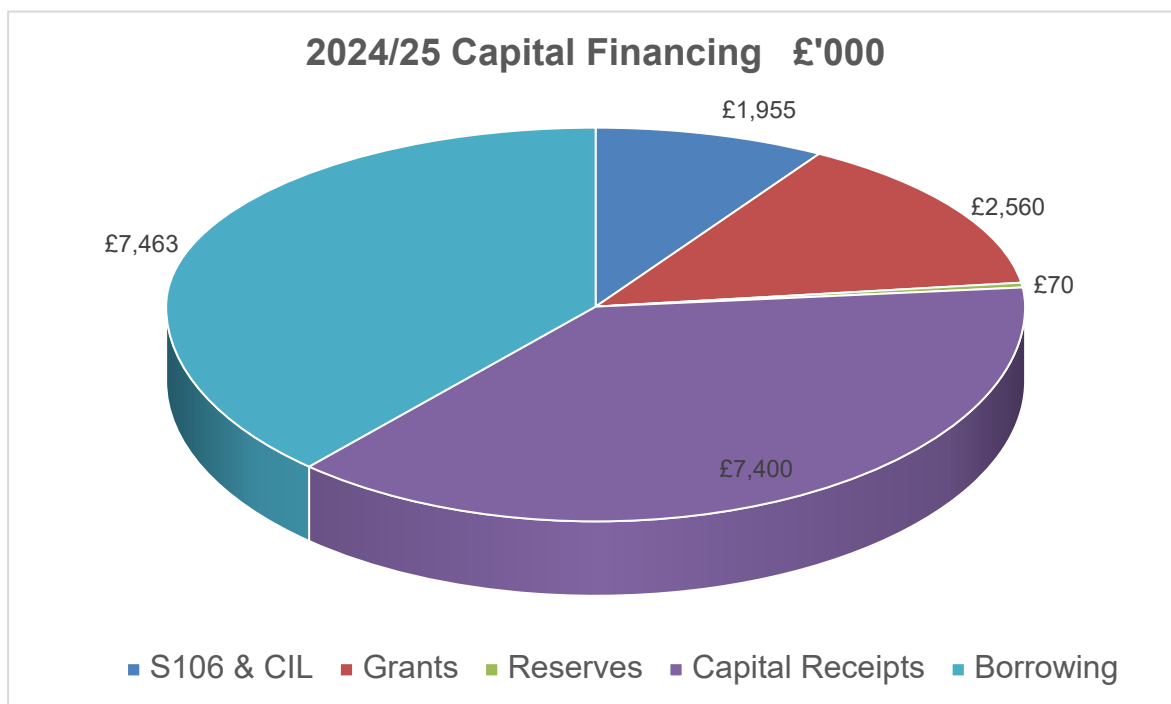


52. The Council continues to invest through its capital programme to deliver on its ambitions. This will include:
- provision of affordable housing, support for refugees and adaptations to assist residents in their homes;
 - improving and transforming the leisure centres to encourage our residents to be active and healthy, along with investment in play, recreation and open spaces;
 - driving economic development through the delivery of the Woodlands development site;
 - supporting our town centre through the town centre masterplan and the recently awarded Levelling-Up fund, for which plans are currently being developed;
 - delivering the green agenda, including decarbonisation of council properties;
 - rationalisation of council accommodation, including relocation of the Bengal St depot and woks to the Town Hall and the former White Hart public house;
 - investment in a programme of refurbishment and replacement of bus shelters across the borough through the Asset Improvements programme.
53. The council's capital programme is constructed upon several objectives including the requirement to be affordable and prudent. To do this the council will ensure that whenever possible, the impact of additional investment on revenue budgets will be minimised. The council has a number of sources of funding it can use to invest in the

borough including, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), section 106 funding, grant funding and capital receipts. Where appropriate the council will also generate future revenue income streams through capital investment to exceed the repayment of borrowing.

Capital Financing

54. The financing of the capital programme for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 is set out in **Appendix F2** to the budget report and the financing of the programme in 24/25 is summarised in the proceeding chart;



55. The capital programme includes a number of schemes that are forecast to generate revenue and/or capital receipts, that will meet the annual cost of borrowing required to complete the project. These include the completion of the £11.4m development at Strawberry Meadows, the £2.375m budget for purchasing affordable housing and the £6.5m investment in the development of the Woodlands site.
56. The council will invest at least £1.953m over the coming three years of contributions from developers as outlined in **Appendix F2**. A summary of section 106 funding received and allocated is attached in **Appendix F3**.
57. **Appendix G** to the budget report outlines the council's capital strategy including specific risks within the capital programme, performance indicators and the council's capital ambition beyond the three-year budget cycle.

Conclusion

58. This paper outlines the Executive's budget proposals for 2024/25 which are:
- a balanced budget made possible by efficiency savings and increased income delivered over the course of 2023/24 and prior years;
 - a balanced budget set against a backdrop of uncertainty surrounding local government funding reforms, which are unlikely to be developed and implemented until after the next general election expected later in 2024;
 - a balanced budget through the successful delivery of successive financial strategies to date, which have provided for continued revenue investment in the 2024/25 budget;
 - investments to be made in key areas to support the Corporate Strategy:
 1. Housing where residents can live well;
 2. An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas;
 3. A green and sustainable borough;
 4. Healthy, safe and engaged communities.
 - an MTFS that reflects assumptions made, and assessed, in the light of the latest information available at this time, and which is also compatible with:
 1. the proposed Capital Strategy as set out in **Appendix G**
 2. the proposed Treasury Management Strategy as set out in **Appendix H1**
 3. the proposed Pay Policy as set out in **Appendix I**
59. The MTFS at **Appendix C** contains the updated budget forecasts through to 2026/27 and identifies that further budget savings will be required to bridge the funding gap over the three year period. The forecasted budget deficit in 2025/26 is estimated to be £0.747m and the MTFS sets out options that can be considered to bridge this gap and thereby strengthen the council's financial position over into 2026/27 and the longer term; the savings plan to address this will be developed over the coming months.
60. The council will need to continue working hard and be innovative and creative in order to continue to make efficiencies, whilst at the same time minimising the impact on services. There are still factors that may affect the current forecast financial position, namely changes in the local government funding system, i.e. the Fair Funding review, changes to the business rates system, the impact of the 'levelling-up' agenda, the cost of living crisis and high inflation and interest rates. The focus of the council's approach will be to identify and deliver income generating projects as well as generating further efficiencies as set out in the MTFS at **Appendix C** of this report.
61. The contents of this report are supplemented with additional appendices to provide further details as referenced below.

Climate change and air quality

62. Reducing the carbon footprint is a national and global issue; the council is committed to realising its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and will seek to attract support and funding from our partners, including the Government, to assist in achieving this priority objective.

Equality and diversity

63. Consultation has been undertaken regarding this budget and the Integrated Impact Assessment is attached at **Appendix J** to this report.

Risk

64. There are no immediate risks associated with this report, however if it is not possible to approve the final budget report in February 2024, then the council will not achieve its statutory obligation to produce a balanced budget and it would be unable to finance its commitments to its corporate priorities.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

65. All proposals within the report are funded and can be accommodated within the 2024/25 budget.
66. It should be noted that the Budget and MTFs do contain several assumptions and these are detailed in the body of the report; the Budget also includes figures based on the forecast final out-turn position for 2023/24. Should any of the assumptions or figures change due to unforeseen circumstances arising before 31st March 2024, the financial position will be reviewed and reported.
67. The financial implications are detailed within the body of the report, and furthermore in the *Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27* at **Appendix C** and the *Chief Finance Officer's Report* at **Appendix B1**.
68. Consideration is given in **Appendix G – Capital Strategy** to the risks and opportunities contained within the council's capital programme.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

69. The budget proposals are in accordance with the requirements of legislation.

Background documents

70. Executive Cabinet Report -18 January 2024 – Draft 2024/25 Budget

Appendices

Appendix A	Formal Council Tax Resolution 2024/25 including Special Expenses and Parish Precepts
Appendices B1 - B3	Report of the Chief Finance Officer on the robustness of the estimates within the overall budget, including the risks contained within it and the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves
Appendix C	Delivering Our Priorities - Chorley Council Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/26
Appendix D	Cumulative Budget Deficit & Budget Strategy 2024-25 to 2026-27, including the analysis of the movement in the 2024/25 Budget from the position approved by Council in February 2023
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Appendix F1	Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27
Appendix F2	Capital Programme Financing 2023/24 to 2026/27
Appendix F3	Developer's Contributions 2020/21 to 2024/25
Appendix G	Capital Strategy
Appendix H1	Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 to 2026/27
Appendix H2	Advice of Treasury Management Consultants
Appendix I	Pay Policy 2024/25
Appendix I (i)	Payscales Chorley Council
Appendix I (ii)	Payscales Shared Services
Appendix J	Budget Consultation 2024/25
Appendix K	Assessing the Impact of the 2024/25 Budget Proposals

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