

People & Health Scrutiny Committee & Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee 12 & 17 January 2024 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan strategy report

For Review and Consultation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr G Suttle, Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

Report Author: Sean Cremer
Title: Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial
Tel: (01305) 228685
Email: sean.cremer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

The Scrutiny Committees are asked to review and comment on the budget proposals set out in the draft Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1 to this covering report and provide any feedback to Cabinet in time for responses to be included in the report being considered on 30 January 2024.

Reason for Recommendation:

The Council is required to set a balanced revenue budget, and to approve a level of council tax as an integral part of this. A balanced budget is essentially one where all expenditure is funded by income without unsustainable use of one-off or short-term sources of finance.

Part of the approval process includes the budget proposals being considered formally by Scrutiny Committees prior to Cabinet approval.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for Dorset Council's 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets and summarises the medium-term financial plan (MTFP), which covers the following three years to 2027/28.
- 1.2 The budget proposals are built around the priorities identified in the Dorset Council Plan.
- 1.3 This budget continues to reflect members' priorities of resource allocation into front line services wherever possible and this is reflected in the areas of growth set out in the analysis in this paper.
- 1.4 In recent years, the Council's budget setting has taken place against a backdrop of a pandemic. Whilst the prominence of this global event may have waned, the impact is still being felt, not only through the virus still presenting itself and causing serious illness and death, but also in the aftermath of health and care systems coping with the continuing impact and the emerging arrangements, post-pandemic.
- 1.5 This budget is being set against a global economic backdrop of high inflation, economic volatility, a cost-of-living crisis and industrial action across many public services.

2. **Financial implications**

- 2.1 All covered within the Cabinet report.

3. **Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology implications**

- 3.1 All covered within the Cabinet report.

4. **Well-being and health implications**

- 4.1 None specifically identified in the Cabinet report.

5. **Other implications**

- 5.1 None specific.

6. **Risk Assessment**

- 6.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: High
Residual Risk: High

7. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

- 7.1 The budget is a framework for the Council to achieve its priorities and the requirement to achieve a balanced budget is delivered through a number of key assumptions, and the delivery of programmes of transformational change.
- 7.2 The overall budget framework has not been the subject of a separate equality impact assessment but the programmes and changes upon which delivery of the budget will depend will themselves be assessed.

8. **Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Cabinet report on budget and MTFP strategy

9. **Background Papers**

- 9.1 None