

# COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

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## Council Meeting

23 February 2022

## Supplementary Information

Please note that the business will be subject to short breaks at approximately 90-minute intervals.

**2. Have Your Say!**

**4. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

A.... Motion that the minutes of the meetings on 2 December 2021 and 20 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record (see page 9 of the Council Summons) .

**6. Items (if any) referred under the Call-in Procedure**

None

**7. Recommendations of the Cabinet, Panels and Committees**

To consider the following recommendation:-

**7(i) Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Forecast**

B... Motion that the recommendations contained in draft minute 622 of the Cabinet meeting of 26 January 2022 and the recommendations in the report entitled "Precept and Council Tax Levels 2022-23" be approved and adopted (see page 21 of the Council Summons).

### Main Amendments

**A. Proposer: Councillor King, seconded by Councillor Fox and Councillor Nissen**

That the recommendations contained in draft minute of the Cabinet meeting of 26 January 2022 and the recommendations contained in the Chief Operating Officer's report entitled "Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Forecast' be approved and adopted, subject to such amendments

necessary to give effect to the following resolution, for the reasons and purposes set out below:

- 1.0 **Recognising the energy and cost of living crisis faced by so many, including the most vulnerable and just about managing.** Noting that the Government's Council Tax rebate and fuel bills loan will be far too late and too little to stop yet more families falling into fuel poverty, to choose between warmth and food:
- 1.1 **To freeze Council Tax in 2022/23** to help with the public's cost of living and energy crisis at a cost of some £0.32m in 2022/23. And to create:
- 1.2 **A Colchester Emergency Fund** targeted help for those in extreme difficulty, whether with food or warmth or other essential needs, as a supplement to national schemes and other support, working through our community partners. at a one off cost of £100k in 2022/23
- 1.3 **A Crisis Reaction Service**, drawing on our high performing benefits team but strengthening them, acknowledging rising demand. So that they can continue to connect residents to sources of support and to otherwise alleviate hardship, at pace, with partners. At a cost of £50K, in 2022/23 and future years.

### **Cost and Use of Reserves**

It is recognised that these amendments increase the revenue budget for 2022/23 by £470,000, to be funded by drawing upon unrestricted reserves. These amendments have implications for later years, by increasing the funding gap, from 2023/24 onwards. It is recognised this will have to be addressed by the Council, through further efficiencies, savings or use of reserves. The amendments however are modest in scale relative to the Budget but will provide encouragement, relief and support to many.

Because of the referendum principles, a freeze in Council Tax for 2022/23 would be a loss in each year of the MTFF, £320k in 2022/23 or £1.7m across the five years.

An updated version of the MTFF agreed by Cabinet in January 2022 is shown below in Table 1, which includes the above proposed amendments. The January MTFF position is shown in Table 2 for comparison.

<b>Table 1</b>				
<b>2022/23 Budget and MTFF – Proposed amendments above</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Previous year's budget</b>	<b>21,747</b>	<b>22,025</b>	<b>22,030</b>	<b>23,365</b>
Cost pressures & Growth items	2,319	396	900	900
Capital financing	0	609	385	(276)
Income losses	0	(150)	(200)	(200)
Savings	(2,045)	(146)	(50)	(50)
Change in forecast use of new homes bonus	4	(704)	300	0
<b>Current year's budget</b>	<b>22,025</b>	<b>22,030</b>	<b>23,365</b>	<b>23,739</b>
Business rates	(6,413)	(5,956)	(5,500)	(5,044)
Govt Grant	(568)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,954)	(950)	(950)	(950)
Council Tax	(12,980)	(13,425)	(13,878)	(14,339)
Previously planned use of reserves	810	935	935	935
Covid use of reserves	(920)	(400)	(200)	(200)
<b>Budget Gap Cumulative</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,234</b>	<b>3,772</b>	<b>4,141</b>

<b>Table 2</b>				
<b>2022/23 Budget and MTFF – January Cabinet</b>	<b>22/23</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Previous year's budget</b>	<b>21,747</b>	<b>21,875</b>	<b>21,980</b>	<b>23,315</b>
Cost pressures & Growth items	2,169	496	900	900
Capital financing	0	609	385	(276)
Income losses	0	(150)	(200)	(200)
Savings	(2,045)	(146)	(50)	(50)
Change in forecast use of new homes bonus	4	(704)	300	0
<b>Current year's budget</b>	<b>21,875</b>	<b>21,980</b>	<b>23,315</b>	<b>23,689</b>
Business rates	(6,413)	(5,956)	(5,500)	(5,044)
Govt Grant	(568)	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,954)	(950)	(950)	(950)
Council Tax	(13,300)	(13,757)	(14,221)	(14,693)
Previously planned use of reserves	810	935	935	935
Covid use of reserves	(450)	(400)	(200)	(200)
<b>Budget Gap Cumulative</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,852</b>	<b>3,379</b>	<b>3,737</b>

## **B. Proposer: Councillor Goacher**

That the recommendations contained in draft minute of the Cabinet meeting of 26 January 2022 and the recommendations contained in the Chief Operating Officer's report entitled "Budget 2022-23 and Medium Term Financial Forecast" be approved and adopted, subject to such amendments necessary to give effect to the following proposals for the reasons and purposes set out below:

The U.K. is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, according to the World Wildlife Fund's 2019 'Living Planet Report', which placed the U.K. in 189th place out of 218 countries. According to a further report by the Natural History Museum (London), the U.K. has just 53% of its biodiversity left compared to a 75% global average. There is an ecological emergency as well as a climate emergency and the U.K. is facing an ecological recession with 41% of species having declined since 1970.

It is not always easy for members and officers to fully appreciate the ecological impact of policy initiatives without expert advice.

In this context, Colchester Council needs an in-house ecologist to oversee and advise officers and members on the ecological impact of all that we do and to liaise with outside organisations and experts. They would work alongside officers responsible for the climate emergency and Woodland Project.

Therefore it is proposed that:-

- £34,000 per annum be allocated to fund the recruitment and appointment of an in-house Ecology Officer post.
- For the first year this would be funded out of reserves and for subsequent years to be part or fully funded out of savings made by reducing funding to ecologically damaging projects as identified by the Ecology Officer. Thus part of their role becoming to fund their own job via conducting an ecological audit of Council activities."

### **7(ii) Resetting the Capital Programme and Strategy**

C... Motion that the recommendations contained in draft minute 623 of the Cabinet meeting of 26 January 2022 be approved and adopted (see page 37 of the Council Summons).

### **7(iii) Councillor Development Policy**

D... Motion that the recommendation contained in draft minute 632 of the Cabinet meeting of 26 January 2022 be approved and adopted (see page 39 of the Council Summons).

**Questions to Cabinet Members and Chairmen pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10**

(i) Councillor Cox to Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy

*What was the outcome of the bidding process that closed on 9 November 2021 in relation to the purchase of the former ABRO site? If CBC's own bid was unsuccessful, can Councillors and Officers be briefed – in confidence if necessary – on the successful bid?*

(ii) Councillor J. Young to Councillor Dundas, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy

*Greenstead and Longridge residents are already suffering the consequences of development in Tendring up to our border at Salary Brook including drainage works our side of the river to facilitate the 145 homes Bellway Homes are building . Can I have the Leader of the Council's assurance that the 1.5km buffer zone protecting the Salary Brook local nature reserve will be adhered to in the DPD being developed ?*

(iii) Councillor J. Young to Councillor Laws, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Business and Heritage

*I fully support investment in the Castle to enable appropriate catering to take place to enhance the visitor experience, but do we really need our Jewel in our Crown, Colchester Castle, converted into a gin bar ? If this plan proceeds how will this be made accessible to all and our historic asset be protected ?*

(iv) Councillor Lilley to Councillor Crow, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability

*Could the Council set up a pump to help relieve the continuous problem of the flooding at the Hythe. The Hythe Task Group keeps talking the talk but the road still floods. Will the Portfolio Holder agree to get a pump in and help business and motorists from this nightmare?*

(v) Councillor Fox to Councillor Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning

*Please could the Portfolio Holder confirm that for the plan period to 2033, the Tendring/Colchester Borders Garden Community will deliver a 50/50 split between the two authorities with regards to meeting our housing target and the proportion of affordable housing that will be delivered?*

**9. Approval of Non Attendance**

E. Motion that the recommendation contained in the Monitoring Officer's

report be approved and adopted (see page 41 of the Council Summons).

**10. Schedule of Portfolio Holder Decisions**

Council is invited to note the schedule of Portfolio Holder decisions covering the period 20 November 2021 – 10 February 2022 (see page 43 of the Council Summons).

**12. Exclusion of the Public**

In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public, including the press, from the meeting so that any items containing exempt information (for example confidential, personal, financial or legal advice) in Part B of this agenda (printed on yellow paper) may be decided. Exempt information is defined in Section 100(1) and Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).