

Item

Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee 15 January 2024: General Fund (GF) budget proposals 2024/25 and update to the budget setting context

To:

Councillor Simon Smith, Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources Portfolio

Report by:

Caroline Ryba, Chief Finance Officer

Tel: 01223 - 458134 Email: caroline.ryba@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

(All) Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the financial context for budget setting and presents GF budget proposals and allocations of general reserves for scrutiny (**Appendix 1**).
- 1.2 Following scrutiny and the completion of the budget consultation, the GF budget setting report (BSR) will be produced for consideration by The Executive on 5 February 2024 and recommendation to Full Council for 15 February 2024.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is asked to:

- 2.1 Approve the GF revenue and capital proposals as presented in Appendices B(a), B(b), and C, pages 16 to 23, of the attached report, for inclusion in the GF BSR.

- 2.2 Note the impact of the revenue proposals on the five year savings requirement identified in the GF Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), section 3 page 9.
- 2.3 To approve for inclusion in the GF BSR:
- the creation of the Civic Quarter Development Reserve with the remit set out in section 5, pages 11 and 12,
 - the allocation of £20m of general reserves to this new reserve,
 - the allocation of £750k of general reserves to the Climate Change Fund, as set out in section 5, page 11.

3. Background

- 3.1 As a result of the ongoing review of the budget setting process, it was agreed that revenue and capital proposals should be presented for scrutiny in January 2024. These proposals are presented in **Appendix 1** - Budget proposals and context 2024/25, along with updates to the financial context for budget setting, including the provisional local government finance settlement announced on 18 December 2023.
- 3.2 An online budget consultation, [Project • Budget 2024 to 2025 \(citizenlab.co\)](https://citizenlab.co), is open for comments from Tuesday 21 November 2023 to Sunday 14 January 2024. Following completion of the consultation, scrutiny of budget proposals, and consideration of the outcomes of these, a final GF BSR will be compiled for discussion and approval. This BSR will include the final local government finance settlement, if available, business rates estimates and the formal council tax setting proposal.

4. Implications

- 4.1 These are incorporated within the document and will be taken account of in the subsequent budget reports.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

- 5.1 An online budget consultation, as indicated above, is being undertaken.

6. Background papers

- 6.1 Background papers used in the preparation of this report:
- MTFS working papers on the 2024/25 files

7. Appendices

The following items are included with this report:

- **Appendix 1** – Budget proposals and context 2024/25

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Authors' Names: Caroline Ryba
Authors' Phone Numbers: 01223 - 458134
Authors' Emails: caroline.ryba@cambridge.gov.uk