

**THE EXECUTIVE**

22 October 2024  
5.30 - 6.25 pm

**Present:** Councillors Davey (Chair), Bird, Holloway, Moore, Smart, S. Smith, Thornburrow and Wade

Councillor Gilderdale was present virtually.

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**24/18/Exec Apologies**

There were no apologies received.

**24/19/Exec Declarations of Interest**

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Gerri Bird	24/22/Exec	Member of CIP Board
Councillor Simon Smith	24/22/Exec	Member of CIP Board

**24/20/Exec Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**24/21/Exec Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**24/22/Exec Budget Consultation 2025/26**

The Executive met to consider the recommendation to approve the public consultation on the council's 2025/26 budget, as set out at Appendix 1, to run from 23 October to 4 December 2024.

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the report. On 10 October 2024, the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Full

Council. This sets out the strategic outline approach to setting the council's 2025/26 budget, including the need for the council to reduce its annual net expenditure in the General Fund by £6 million per year by 1 April 2026. The report being presented was to approve the format and content of the public budget consultation.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources stated that local government had been an unprotected service over a number of previous years, combined with high rates of inflation. The Council was required to balance their books and achieve financial sustainability. The Council was seeking the views of residents on the proposals outlined in the consultation before any final decisions were made. In addition, the Council was on the way to modernising and transforming the services it delivered to its residents as well as ensuring there were reserves in place to meet any emergencies that were unforeseen.

In response to questions from opposition members, the Executive responded and a summary is outlined below:

- i) The principles for the budget and process were outlined at the recent Strategy and Resources Committee.
- ii) The questions outlined in the consultation referenced the work of the transformation journey the Council was on.
- iii) It was important that the £6 million pound savings target was achieved with long term planning and processes, ensuring services were protected and in other cases enhanced.
- iv) Responses from the consultation would be collated by the 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025 as part of the scrutiny process.
- v) With regards to the question on whether to remove and re-frame the questions on public toilets, this was being asked as part of the consultation and the views of the public would be taken into account, the question was not proposed to be amended.
- vi) The proposed consultation was to give a broad range of questions and options to the public to consider and to help inform those areas to make savings within. Both CCTV and sports facilities were an important part of council functions, in particular wanting members of the public to be as active as possible.
- vii) Within the proposals there was around £6 million of potential savings. The Executive would reflect on the comments from the consultation before presenting final budget proposals.

- viii) There were further financial events between now and the New Year, namely the Autumn Budget and the Local Government Finance Settlement, which could impact proposals.
- ix) Central government set the thresholds for Council tax increases. A mechanism was in place if local authorities wanted to increase this beyond the threshold but had rarely been used and had all failed.
- x) There was to be a review on rent received from commercial property.
- xi) There was now a booking system for example when booking tennis courts which would reduce some costs down in terms of having to have less people involved in taking bookings. There was still modelling taking place to look at the most efficient ways of making savings.
- xii) On car parking charges there was a proposal to increase these to a higher level. There was a risk on reduced demand, however there would still significant income gained and an additional benefit of less congestion within the city.
- xiii) The design of any public consultation was difficult. The consultation as drafted was easy to understand and was quick and simple for members of the public to pick up respond to.
- xiv) The Council was looking to protect as many of the discretionary services as was possible.

Members of the Executive raised questions and made comments a summary of those are set out below:

- i) There was opportunity to amend the wording in question 22 to allow the public to give some further views.
- ii) Residents and opposition members were welcome to attend meetings of the Executive as they were meetings held in public.

There was a proposal, which was seconded to amend the foreword in paragraph 5 to include at the end of the last sentence “and through our Community Wealth Building work help voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises to address pressing community needs.”

On a vote the above addition was approved unanimously.

A further proposal was made and seconded to amend question 22 of the consultation (underlined addition below).

22) Do you have any other comments about the measures set out above or any other proposals? For example, are there any that you particularly support or oppose, and why.

On a vote the above addition was approved unanimously.

**The Executive agreed (unanimous) to:**

Approve the public consultation, subject to amendments, on the council's 2025/26 budget, as set out at Appendix 1, to run from 23 October to 4 December 2024

Amendments to Appendix 1: Additional words underlined

Foreword, paragraph 5

Because the council's finances have been well managed to date, we have time to take a measured approach to finding savings. We will continue to focus on modernising and finding efficiencies to bring down costs and through our Community Wealth Building work help voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises to address pressing community needs.

Question 22

1) Do you have any other comments about the measures set out above or any other proposals? For example, are there any that you particularly support or oppose, and why

The meeting ended at 6.25 pm

**CHAIR**