

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SPECIAL ANGUS COUNCIL – 29 FEBRUARY 2024**

**2024/25 REVENUE & CAPITAL BUDGET SETTING  
PROPOSED BUDGETS FOR THE VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH  
DIRECTORATE**

**JOINT REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES AND  
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND IAN LORIMER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

**1. ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed revenue and capital budgets for the Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth Directorate covering the 2024/25 provisional revenue and capital budgets, budget savings from the Council's Finance & Change Plan, review of charges proposals and budget issues proposed to be included in the budget. Equalities impact assessments for these proposals are also provided. Proposed budget savings for financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27 are included in this report on an indicative basis only – final decisions on those savings will be made as part of the budget setting process for those financial years.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES**

- 2.1 This report contributes as a whole to the delivery of the Council Plan.

**3. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Council:
- (i) note and approve the budget issues contained in Appendix A for inclusion in the Directorate's 2024/25 provisional revenue budget;
  - (ii) note and approve the budget savings contained in Appendix B for inclusion in the Directorate's 2024/25 provisional revenue budget;
  - (iii) note and approve the review of fees and charges contained in Appendix C for inclusion in the Directorate's 2024/25 provisional budget;
  - (iv) note and approve the 2024/25 Provisional Revenue Budget for the Directorate as set out in Appendix D;
  - (v) note and approve the 2024/25 Provisional Capital Budget for the Directorate as set out in Appendix E;
  - (vi) note that the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets set out in this report form part of the Council's total budget for determining the 2024/25 Council Tax.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Reference is made to Report 228/23 submitted to the Policy & Resources Committee on 29 August 2023 which set out the approach and timetable for the preparation of the 2024/25 revenue and capital budgets.

**5. CURRENT POSITION**

- 5.1 This report and its appendices sets out the proposed 2024/25 provisional revenue and capital budgets for the Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth Directorate which along with the proposed budgets for all other Directorates and corporate budget items will make up the Council's total budget so that the 2024/25 Council Tax can be determined by elected members.

## **6. PROPOSALS**

### **6.1 2024/25 Provisional Revenue Budget**

The proposed 2024/25 revenue budget for the Directorate comprises the following:-

### **6.2 Budget Issues (see Appendix A for details)**

Through the budget setting process each Director identifies areas of their budget where specific issues are expected to arise which will mean that the current budget provision is inadequate and may need to be increased e.g. due to inflation or increased service demand. Some budget issues need to be taken at risk due to affordability constraints but those which are considered to be unavoidable are recommended for inclusion in the proposed revenue budget.

### **6.3 Budget Savings (see Appendix B for details)**

The Council's financial challenges mean that savings in existing budgets must be made to achieve a balanced budget overall. Budget savings help to offset the additional costs arising from budget issues and other cost increases such as pay and general inflation. The Council's Change Programme as set out in the Finance & Change Plan (Report 49/24 refers) covers all of the savings being proposed in the Council's budget over the financial years 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27. The budget savings proposed to be applied to the Directorate's 2024/25 budget and which elected members are being asked to approve are set out in Appendix B. The proposed budget savings for financial years 2025/26 and 2026/27 included in Appendix B are indicative only at this point – final decisions on those savings will be made as part of the budget setting process for those financial years.

### **6.4 Review of Charges (see Appendix C for details)**

The Council levies fees and charges for some services it provides. Some of these are set nationally but most are determined by the Council. Increases in fees and charges are usually necessary to reflect the impact of inflation on the cost of providing services. The proposed fees and charges for the Directorate's services for financial year 2024/25 are set out in Appendix C.

### **6.5 Directorate Net Expenditure Summary (see Appendix D for details)**

An overall summary of the proposed 2024/25 revenue budget for the Directorate is included as Appendix D to this report. This includes the budget implications from the budget issues, budget savings and review of charges and other budget proposals contained in Appendices A to D and represents the proposed 2024/25 Provisional Revenue Budget for the Directorate.

6.6 All of the 2024/25 revenue budget proposals set out in this report have been incorporated into the Council's overall budget for the year, a summary of which is included in Report 63/24 – Provisional Revenue and Capital Budget 2024/25 - Background Report & Setting of Council Tax 2024/25. Members are being asked to approve the revenue budget proposals for 2024/25.

### **6.7 2024/25 Provisional Capital Budget (see Appendix E for details)**

The Council's capital budget is where proposed investment in Council assets and infrastructure is captured. The 2024/25 Provisional Capital Budget for the Directorate is included as Appendix E to this report. Appendix E shows the proposed and projected capital budget covering financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28. Members are being asked to approve the capital budget for all of the financial years shown in Appendix E on the basis that budgets for 2025/26 to 2027/28 will be subject to further review as part of the budget setting process for those years.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no additional financial implications for the Council beyond those set out in the body and appendices of this report. Members should however note that any changes to the budget proposals set out in this report which have financial implications will impact onto the Council's overall budget and the basis for achieving a balanced budget.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

8.1 The following risks from the Corporate Risk Register are relevant to this report:-

- Financial Sustainability
- Transforming for the Future

## 9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

### 9.1 Removal of Path Maintenance Budget

**Accessibility of paths.** Cessation of grass cutting operations will make most paths inaccessible to many people within the first growing season. Some wider paths, such as parts of National Cycle Route 1, may not become totally obstructed, but encroaching vegetation will reduce the useable width making them no longer fit for purpose for the intended use. Partially overgrown paths may be accessible to people with a good level of fitness, but the need to push through and brush against tall and/or wet vegetation will make access challenging or unpleasant, and will have a greater impact on elderly people, disabled people, and those with health or mobility issues.

In the longer term, inability to carry out additional periodic maintenance task as required on an ad-hoc basis, will lead to further paths becoming overgrown and inaccessible.

**Damage to path surfaces.** Cessation of routine maintenance of path drainage will leave the paths at high risk of catastrophic damage during storm events.

**Climate change.** Encouraging a shift from carbon-based transport to active and sustainable travel, including walking and cycling, is an important element of the response to climate change. This requires well-maintained paths that are fit for purpose. Overgrown and poorly maintained paths will deter residents from switching to active travel.

## 10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as follows:

Budget saving – proposed Removal of Planning and Sustainable Growth, Path Networks Maintenance Budget.

Budget Saving – Economic Development Service Review

Budget Saving – Targeted Preventative Approach

Other budget proposals in this report do not require full EIAs as they do not impact on people or are for information only. Screening assessments have been undertaken for these other proposals.

## 11. CONSULTATION

11.1 The Chief Executive and Director of Legal, Governance & Change have been consulted on this report.

**NOTE:** The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Finance Circular 8/2023 issued by the Scottish Government

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List of Appendices:

Appendix A – Directorate Budget Issues

Appendix B – Directorate Budget Savings

Appendix C – Directorate Review of Charges

Appendix D – Directorate Net Expenditure Summary - 2024/25 Provisional Revenue Budget

Appendix E – Directorate 2024/25 Provisional Capital Budget

Appendix B1 – EIA Removal of Path Network Maintenance Budget

Appendix B2 – EIA Economic Development Service Review

Appendix B3 – EIA A Targeted Preventative Approach