

Blaby District Council

Scrutiny of the Administration's Budget Proposals

Date of Meeting	10 January 2024
Title of Report	Budget Context Setting and Overview
Report Author	Executive Director (Section 151 Officer)

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 This is an information report which gives Members an overview of the budget proposals for 2024/25 Financial year. This includes an update on significant points arising from the Settlement of December 2023 issued by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and also a projection of the Council's funding position into future years.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That Members consider the information contained within the reports and comments on the budget process and arrangements for the scrutiny of the budget proposals.

3. Reason for Decision(s) Recommended

- 3.1 To inform and seek Scrutiny Commissions comments on the proposals.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

The purpose of this first budget session is to give Members a view of the following:

- Impact of the Settlement December 2023
- Total Budget Requirement for the Authority 2024/25 financial year
- Funding the Budget
- Budget Gap
- Options included to meet the funding gap
- General Budget Assumptions
- Impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) financial summary including Future Business Rates and Fairer Funding position

4.2 Proposal(s)

This information is presented in documents within the appendices and are provided to inform Scrutiny to understand and scrutinise the budget prior to Council considering the budget proposals at February Council. It is important to note that this budget is in draft format and may change prior to the February meeting should additional information become available.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

Officers from Finance and all services have worked closely together to compile the draft budget.

4.4 Significant Issues

None.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 5.1 Detailed budgets for each portfolio are included within the appendices, as are the overall budget costs and funding levels.

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Reductions in the Government Grant Settlement.	The Council has historically taken a prudent approach in forecasting its core grant funding for the MTFS and modelled scenarios based on information currently available. The Council has general fund balances available that can be used in the short to medium term to help address funding gaps.
Withdrawal of external funding.	External funding has only been built into the base budget where it has been confirmed by external partners. Officers continue to work with partners to minimise the impact of funding cuts on services.
Change to the Business Rate Retention Scheme and the Fair Funding Review.	Changes to Business Rate Retention and funding levels are now expected to be implemented in 2026/27, but it is unknown as to the extent of the changes. The draft MTFS attempts to forecast the impact of this potential change. As further technical consultation papers are released officers will attempt to understand how the changes may impact Blaby. Officers will respond to any consultation papers and if required, lobby the DLUHC should there be concern regarding the changes.

7. Other options considered

- 7.1 None. It is necessary for Members to understand the financial context in which the budget is set and the detail of the budget.

8. Other significant issues

- 8.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 Appendix A – 2023/24 Budget Overview 10th January 2024 (to follow)
- 9.2 Appendix B – Analysis of Reserves (to follow)
- 9.3 Appendix C – Schedule of External Funding (to follow)
- 9.4 Appendix D – Establishment Trend information (to follow)
- 9.5 Appendix E – Draft MTFS Financial Summary (to follow)
- 9.6 Appendix F – Leaders Portfolio Budget (to follow)
- 9.7 Appendix G – Finance, People & Performance Portfolio Budget (to follow)
- 9.8 Appendix H – Health, Wellbeing, Community Engagement & Business Support Portfolio Budget (to follow)
- 9.9 Appendix I – Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio Budget (to follow)
- 9.10 Appendix J – Housing, Community & Environmental Services Portfolio Budget (to follow)
- 9.11 Appendix K - Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation Portfolio Budget (to follow)

10. Background paper(s)

None

11. Report author's contact details

Sarah Pennelli Executive Director (S151 Officer)
Sarah.Pennelli@blaby.gov.uk 0116 2727650