

BUDGET COUNCIL: 19 FEBRUARY 2025
AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP TO THE 2025/26
BUDGET

(1) Proposed amendments to the revenue budget

	2025/26 £m
Remove budget proposal – car park charges review saving proposal (£0.055m saving in 2025/26 and additional £0.126m saving in 2026/27)	0.055
One-off payment of £100 to all council taxpayers aged 66 or over who are not in receipt of council tax support excluding Councillors or spouse/partner of a Councillor and those who live with Councillors	0.630
Non-recurrent small business fund with an excluding criterion that no Councillor or spouse/partner of a Councillor would be eligible to apply for a grant for a business they own or have an interest in	0.615
Increase saving proposal – contract efficiencies	-0.250
Increase staffing budget vacancy factor to 5%	-0.750
Reprofile capital programme to delay works not contractually committed in 2025/26 reducing revenue financing costs in year	-0.300
£0.050m one-off investment in bringing in external capacity to identify commercial income-generating opportunities for the council under the direction of the Commercial Board. (funded from the uncommitted £1m of capital receipt flexibilities built into the 2025/26 revenue budget)	0.050
Total cost of proposed amendments	0.050

The proposed changes to the revenue budget do not affect the 2025/26 budget gap of £5.858m (as the overall net cost of £0.050m would be funded from capital receipt flexibilities) which is being met from the budget stabilisation reserve, but will reduce the forecast funding gap recurrently from 2026/27 by £0.569m resulting from the ongoing impact of the increase in the vacancy factor (£0.750m) less the full impact of the removal of the car parking charges budget proposal (£0.181m). This would lead to a lower overall requirement from the budget stabilisation reserve of £1.138m in meeting the current forecast funding gap in 2026/27 and 2027/28.

View of the Director of Finance (S151)

The proposals have been validated as being deliverable financially in 2025/26.

In validating the proposals, I have been mindful that:

- Increasing the vacancy factor to 5% may require additional measures to be put in place in terms of delaying recruitment to vacant posts should the additional saving not be deliverable in year through staff turnover and standard recruitment timelines.
- The increase to the contract efficiency budget proposal represents an acceleration of savings rather than an increase in the total value achievable over the course of the medium-term financial strategy. This could not be delivered within existing resources and would be supported through investment in additional external capacity funded from capital receipt flexibilities.
- There would be a reduced impact of £1.138m from the budget stabilisation reserve required to meet the current forecast structural deficit over the medium-term financial strategy.

In the intervening period the council will need to take steps to address the structural deficit to ensure it can maintain a sustainable financial position.