




## Report to Cabinet

<b>Date:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Draft Revenue budget and Capital Programme</b>
<b>Cabinet Member(s):</b>	Cllr Martin Tett - Leader
<b>Contact officer:</b>	David Skinner, Service Director Finance Matt Strevens, Head of Corporate Finance, ext. 3181
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Cabinet is asked to;</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>note and consider the outcome of the Budget Consultation (Appendix 4).</b></li><li>- <b>note the current risks associated with the draft budget proposals.</b></li><li>- <b>approve the draft revenue budget and capital programme (Appendix 1-3).</b></li><li>- <b>agree the proposal that delegation be sought from Council to Cabinet for up to £100m of new capital schemes, funded through Prudential Borrowing, to be added to the Capital programme where robust financial business cases are made (para 7.4).</b></li><li>- <b>Agree the Schedule of Fees &amp; Charges for 2023/24 (Appendix 5).</b></li><li>- <b>note that a supplementary report, the formal Council Tax Resolution, will accompany the final Budget to full Council.</b></li></ul>
<b>Reason for decision:</b>	To approve a draft budget and capital programme that can then undergo scrutiny and challenge prior to the final budget for Buckinghamshire Council being approved by the Council on the 22nd February 2023.

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The revenue budget presented within this report is for the financial year 2023/24. The decision was taken to prepare a one-year budget due to the extremely high levels of volatility in the economic environment and the uncertainties surrounding future Local Government funding.
- 1.2 Local Government funding remains very uncertain in the medium term due to proposed changes to the Local Government funding regime, potential reviews of Business Rates and Council Tax, and the implementation of key Government policies regarding Adult Social Care reform and the 'Levelling Up' agenda.
- 1.3 The Autumn Statement laid out the Government's funding totals and priorities for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28. Actual allocations to individual authorities have been confirmed through the Provisional Local Government Settlement on 19<sup>th</sup> December and only provide certainty for 2023/24. These are broadly in line with the draft budget and any implications will be considered in the new year / final budget.
- 1.4 Changes to the revenue budget are largely focussed around changes in costs as a result of the significant increase in inflation, service demand and income (both service and corporate), and the recognition of the ongoing risks relating to global economic conditions and the wider Local Government funding regime.
- 1.5 The draft budget proposed is built on the proposed Council Tax base and assumes a 2.99% increase in basic Council Tax and a 2% increase for the Adult Social Care Precept, giving a total increase of 4.99%. This is the maximum allowable without triggering a local referendum and is still significantly below the rate of inflation at 11.1% at the end of October.
- 1.6 The Capital programme is presented over 4 years as many schemes span across multiple financial years. The Council currently has borrowing headroom of £100m. Where schemes are brought forward with a financially viable business case these schemes can be added to the Capital Programmes subject to Cabinet approval.

## **2. Content of report**

- 2.1 This report sets out the draft 1-year revenue budget and 4-year capital programme for Buckinghamshire Council.
  - 2.2 This includes updates on the latest estimated funding position, service budget pressures and the key financial risks facing the Council in the future.
  - 2.3 The Council Tax Resolution report will be presented as a separate report as part of the final budget in February and will contain the final information from the other
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precepting authorities leading to the total Council Tax for the area, which full council is required to approve.

- 2.4 This report does not include special expenses budgets. Discussions are ongoing with the relevant committees to agree special expenses budgets for 2023/24, and these will also be presented alongside the final budget. The level of precept charged in Special Expenses areas forms part of the Council tax referendum threshold calculation, so final Council Tax levels cannot be finalised until this matter is agreed.

### **3. The wider economic environments impact on the Council's budgets**

- 3.1 The importance of robust financial planning over the medium-term is recognised in supporting and evidencing the financial sustainability of the council at a time when a number of other Local Authorities are finding themselves under significant financial stress.
- 3.2 This is evidenced in recent years by the number of Section 114 notices issued, which is when a Council is unable to set a balanced budget, or operate within the budget agreed, and requests for Capitalisation directives to allow capital resources to be deployed to fund ongoing revenue expenditure.
- 3.3 In addition there are currently a number of reviews of other Local Authority finances being undertaken where the government believes unnecessary and ill-considered investment risks have been taken (largely funded through borrowing).
- 3.4 In addition a number of County authorities have suggested that current pressures are unmanageable and that without Government consideration of their purpose and the requirements placed on Local Authorities that there will be many more Section 114 notices issued in the near future.
- 3.5 The Covid-19 pandemic was one of the key influences when agreeing the budget for 2022/23 to 2025/26. The previous budget forms the basis for this latest budget, and as such included assumptions on future demand post-Covid and income recovery following the significant decreases in service income levels as a result of the changes to normal life resulting from the pandemic.
- 3.6 The following factors have been considered and addressed within the draft budget proposals presented alongside this report;
- 3.7 Global economic impacts;
- a) The conflict in the Ukraine has given rise to a number of new pressures. The level of support offered to the Ukrainian military effort is contributing to an increase in Government borrowing which is likely to impact future funding settlements. In addition the reduction in Russian energy supply has created a price pressure on energy from other sources, leading to significant inflation in the energy market. Finally the UK has provided safe haven for

many Ukrainian refugees, which is putting pressure on local services and on national finances.

- b) Immigration and asylum seeking remain at high levels as a result of political volatility in other parts of the world, and Buckinghamshire is supporting refugees from numerous countries.
- c) The global supply chain is still feeling the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, where factories around the globe have been closed to prevent spread of the virus, and the transporter ship incident in the Suez canal, which resulted in failures in logistics and significantly increased transportation costs.

### 3.8 National economic conditions

- a) The governments response to the exceptionally high costs of energy has been to introduce the Energy Price Guarantee scheme for the period until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. This is funded by borrowing and has increased the governments projected debt costs significantly.
- b) As inflation has risen the Monetary Policy Committee has increased interest rates from historic lows to 3%, which is above their target of 2%. This has further increased the Governments debt costs.
- c) The current prediction of the Monetary Policy Committee and the Office for Budget Responsibility is that the UK is entering a recession which will last approximately 2 years. This is likely to impact on tax receipts and the costs of social support, both nationally and locally.
- d) The impact of this is most notable through the Autumn Statement, where whilst spending is broadly maintained in the first 2 years, further years see significant tightening of public spending in order to fund the additional borrowing required to support the nation through the energy crisis and recession.
- e) At a local level the economic downturn is likely to impact both through increased demand for services to residents, and pressure on income both from service budgets and through Council Tax and potentially Business Rates.

### 3.9 Continued covid recovery

- a) Service demand and income were significantly changed through the pandemic, and many of these changes have become base-lined within our budget proposals. Levels of income and excess demand have been considered in context of the recovery plans for 'living with Covid'.

3.10 This draft budget reflects the estimated impacts of the new pressures identified above, along with the continued recovery of income and demand levels as the 'new

normal' of a post-pandemic world emerges. The assumptions behind these impacts are kept under constant review, and when presented to Cabinet the final budget papers will reflect the latest estimates available.

#### **4. Spending Round 2023 and the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement**

- 4.1 The Government's Autumn Statement, presented to the House on 17 November included some significant announcements impacting on Local Government. Key to these were;
- Delaying the implementation of the Adult Social care reforms by 2 years to October 2025;
  - Repurposing of Adult Social care reform funding to support budget pressures in Social Care, through the creation of a new Social Care grant;
  - Additional ringfenced funding for the Council and through the Better Care Fund to support the process of discharge from hospital;
  - An increase to the Adult Social Care Precept referendum threshold to 2% (from 1%);
  - An increase in the basic Council Tax referendum threshold to 2.99% (from 1.99%);
- 4.2 Estimates of the impact of these announcements on the Council's funding and future expenditure have been included in the draft Revenue Budget.
- 4.3 The allocations of additional funding for Social Care are expected to follow the Government's usual allocation methodology, where initial allocations are made using the Relative Needs Formula. This is then adjusted to take account of each Council's ability to raise additional funding through the ASC Precept. The allocations assume that Councils maximise the ASC Precept, and since Buckinghamshire Council has a high level of Council Tax income our calculated share is adjusted downwards significantly. The effect of this mechanism is that we are effectively choosing to under-fund the Council based on the Relative Needs Formula by not utilising the maximum uplift for the ASC Precept.
- 4.4 The long-proposed changes to Local Authority funding regime through the Fair Funding Reforms may significantly impact the distribution basis for Government funding from 2024/25 onwards, and as such, funding for 2024/25 onwards remains significantly uncertain.
- 4.5 The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published on 19<sup>th</sup> December and provided detailed allocations for 2023/24. Given the timing it has not been possible to fully consider the implications of these figures, and as such this Draft Budget is based on estimates. The implications of the Provisional Settlement

are broadly consistent with the Draft Budget and will be considered in the new year / final budget.

## **5. Developing the budget proposals**

- 5.1 The draft budget proposed has been developed by building on the budget agreed by Full Council in February 2022. This covered the period 2022/23 to 2024/25. This latest budget covers the period 2023/24 only.
- 5.2 Whilst the budget presented covers only 2023/24, plans have been developed in the background for 2024/25 and 2025/26 to ensure the continued financial sustainability of the Council. Given the high level of uncertainty then these plans will be reviewed and monitored as more information is released.
- 5.3 The ongoing recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic was the major focus of the last budget agreed by Full Council. Whilst these are still considered within the budget setting process the predominant factor in the budget for 2023/24 is the current and projected high levels of inflation, and continuing growth in demand within our services.
- 5.4 Each Portfolio Holder has been supported by officers to produce a set of draft revenue budgets and capital programme proposals which support the delivery of the Corporate Plan and which address the growth and inflationary pressures identified above.
- 5.5 Previously agreed budget plans were reviewed to ensure they still remain valid, and amendments were made to reflect the latest intelligence on deliverability and robustness.
- 5.6 The volatility of inflation has meant that developing these proposals has been more complex than in recent years. Inflation does not affect all our services in the same way, as they have differing cost drivers. Significant work has been undertaken to understand, review and quantify the likely future impacts of inflation included within the proposed budget.
- 5.7 Growth assumptions have been reviewed using the latest available evidence, and future growth assumptions updated on this basis.
- 5.8 In addition to this a series of savings proposals were developed to ensure the budget could be balanced. These have been reviewed and prioritised by Cabinet to ensure the minimum of impact on our residents.
- 5.9 A review of the Capital programme was also conducted to ensure that existing schemes continue to be appropriate. Inflation is a significant factor within the development of the Capital Programme, as it is with the revenue budget. New capital project bids have been reviewed and evaluated, and the programme amended to ensure it remains in line with the Councils priorities.

5.10 The robustness of existing and new budget proposals will continue to be monitored as part of normal financial management protocols and significance changes to current assumptions will be considered prior to the presentation of the final budget. Any amendments required as a result will be reflected in the final budget, to ensure that the budget remains robust and appropriate.

## 6. The Draft Revenue Budget

6.1 This budget covers the financial year 2023/24 and provides a 'best estimate' which reflects the uncertainties in future costs and demand levels, national policy, global and national economic conditions and Local Government funding.

6.2 Key assumptions within this budget are;

- a) A continuing slow recovery in Council Tax and Business Rates receipts as the economy recovers from the significant shocks experienced in 2020 and 2021;
- b) A continuing recovery in service income (Rental income, parking charges, planning income, etc.);
- c) Continued increased service costs both from heightened levels of inflation and to meet additional demand arising;
- d) Appropriate levels of contingencies and reserves are held to manage the high levels of risk and uncertainty in budget proposals.

6.3 Overall, the draft budget includes **growth pressures of £33.2m** and **£30.0m of inflationary pressures** in 2023/24, with offsetting savings / efficiencies and **increased income of £30.4m** in 2023/24.

6.4 Growth and Inflation added to this budget reflect the increase in costs of service delivery resulting from specific inflation experienced within individual service budgets and the projected increase in demand as a result in growth in the number of service users.

6.5 The overall revenue budget, with each portfolio's element expanded, can be found in **Appendix 1**.

6.6 The key portfolio budget proposals contained within the draft revenue budget are:

- **Growth pressures of £33.3m**, including;
  - £12.1m in Children's Services, due to increased cost of placements, and demand pressures particularly around Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.
  - £10.1m in Health & Wellbeing due to increased Adult Social Care placement costs.
  - £3.7m in Homelessness & Regulatory Services largely from increased Temporary Accommodation.

- £3.8m in Transport, largely from Home to School Transport.
- **Inflationary pressures of £30.0m**, including;
  - £14.8m in Health & Wellbeing.
  - £6.1m in Transport on Home to School contracts and Highways contracts
  - £5.2m in Education & Children’s Services on placement costs
  - £2.4m in Accessible Housing & Resources on Energy costs
  - £1.3m in Climate Change & Environment on Waste contracts
- **Proposed savings of £10.1m**, across all portfolios, including;
  - £2.8m in Education & Children’s Services
  - £2.7m in Health and Wellbeing
  - £1.2m in Accessible Housing & Resources
  - £1.0m in Transport
- **Increased service income of £21.0m**, including;
  - £11.8m additional income from the Energy for Waste plant
  - £2.2m of additional property rental income
  - £1.8m in Health & Wellbeing from increased client charges
  - £1.8m increase parking income as usage recovers post-covid
- **Proposed net use of £4.8m of Portfolio Earmarked Reserves** to fund one-off and project costs (see Appendix 3 for details)

6.7 It is proposed to **increase basic Council Tax by 2.99%**.

6.8 In addition, it is proposed that an **Adult Social Care Precept of 2%** be levied in 2023/24. In line with Government requirements this **additional £7.6m** of funding is all allocated to offset the **£10.1m growth pressures and £14.8m of inflationary pressures** in Adult Social Care budgets.

6.9 The following reflects the key changes in corporate budgets;

- An **increase in Council Tax receipts of £23.2m** through the increase proposed, an increase in the collection rate to 98.3%, and a 1.35% growth in the Council Tax base. Once agreed the implications of the actual Tax Base will be considered and included in the final budget.
- A forecast **Council Tax surplus of £3.5m** from 2022/23
- An **increase in Business Rates retained locally of £8.0m** due to the high level of Business Rates multiplier as at September, and delays to Local Government funding reforms
- An **increase of £5.5m in un-ringfenced grants**, based on the Autumn Statement announcements
- A **reduction in New Homes Bonus of £3.3m**, in line with previous government announcements
- An **increase of £0.6m in Treasury management income** due to increased interest rates on investments
- The **use of £4.8m of Corporate Reserves** as agreed in the previous MTFP (£1.36m from General Fund and £3.45m from Earmarked Reserves to smooth savings plans and to address Collection fund accounting arrangements for deficit spreading)



- Increases in corporate contingencies to mitigate the increased risk (especially for Social Care costs, market sustainability and inflation) arising from the current economic conditions;

6.10 Details of proposed budget changes can be found in **Appendix 3**.

6.11 Whilst this budget provides the best available estimates for the 2023/24 financial year, as previously reported there is significant risk around future income, cost and funding projections. The external environment is continuously monitored, and significant and material changes will be reported and included within the final budget presented to full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

## 7. The Draft Capital Programme

7.1 The Capital programme covers the period 2023/24 to 2026/27, in the recognition that capital projects are often multi-year projects and the uncertainty arising from the pandemic can be managed in other ways.

7.2 A Capital programme review was conducted which covered the existing Capital programme, new capital bids and the prioritisation of those bids for inclusion in the programme to get to a recommended capital programme. The Corporate Capital Investment Board was consulted during this process to provide a steer on the approach to prioritisation.

7.3 A review of the current programme was undertaken during the year in response to the increasing levels of construction inflation. This included a moratorium on uncommitted projects. Opportunities were identified for reducing, reprofiling or removing projects where they were uncommitted, including delaying projects beyond the current planning window in order to create some headroom for new bids. Alongside this the available capital resources were reviewed and future funding estimated.

7.4 Once again it is proposed that **a recommendation is made to Council in February for delegation to be given to Cabinet to add up to £100m worth of schemes to the capital programme, to be funded through prudential borrowing, subject to a robust business case being approved.** This will enable additional priorities, such as regeneration and housing projects, to come forward and be added to the capital programme once positive business cases are fully developed. The prudential borrowing facility may also be used to provide capital loans to our property company Consilio, our joint venture property company Aylesbury Vale Estates and the Enterprise Zone should there be a financially viable and robust business case.

7.5 The overall Capital programme totals **£494.3m** over 4 years. Each Portfolio's element of the Programme can be seen in **Appendix 2**.

7.6 Key highlights within the draft programme are:

- **£33.7m** to support Economic Growth & Regeneration projects;
- **£142.5m** on schools, and school improvement projects;
- **£118.9m** on Strategic Highways maintenance including;
  - i. **£63.1m** on major highway resurfacing schemes;
  - ii. **£13.3m** on Plane & Patch (smaller planned and reactive repairs);
  - iii. **£12.0m** on failed roads;
  - iv. **£6.4m** on Footway repairs;
  - v. **£6.8m** on Street Lighting repairs, replacement and maintenance;
- **£106.7m** on Strategic Transport & Infrastructure;
- **£20.7m** investment in Waste, primarily on vehicle replacement and household recycling centres;
- **£20.0m** to support Housing and Homelessness including affordable housing action plans and disabled facilities grants;
- **£14.3m** on Climate Change and Flood Management.

7.7 All revenue consequences of the Capital programme, including Interest and debt costs and the Minimum Revenue Provision required under Local Authority Accounting guidance have been included in the draft revenue Budget.

## **8. Fees & Charges**

- 8.1 A review of Fees & Charges has been undertaken as part of the development of the budget proposals included in this report. The starting assumption was that Fees & Charges should be uplifted by 9%, as this was the inflation rate at the time the review was initiated. Portfolios have reviewed the options to achieve a balance to increases in fees & charges, and the results are reflected in the Revenue budget proposals presented
- 8.2 The schedule of proposed Fees and Charges for 2022/23 is included as Appendix 5.
- 8.3 Charges for Traded Services to other organisations (including Schools) are not included in this schedule, however it is proposed these should be increased by 6% for pay inflation as it is more representative for those services offered.
- 8.4 **It is recommended that the schedule of Fees and Charges for 2023/24 and the proposed uplift of 6% for traded services are approved.**

## 9. Financial Risks and uncertainties

9.1 Whilst every effort is made to ensure the budget proposals are robust, deliverable and support financial sustainability there are significant risks identified in the proposed draft budget.

9.2 The table below identifies the key risks to these budget proposals:

Inflation and national economic conditions	<p>Global economic instability, along with supply chain interruptions are continuing to impact on inflation levels within the UK economy, which are currently above 10%. This will impact both in terms of pay pressures and the costs of our supply chain. Whilst Covid-19 related factors are diminishing, the impact of geo-political tensions and conflict are significant and uncertain. As such forecasts are that inflation will return to more normal levels, but the longevity and voracity of these impacts is uncertain.</p> <p>Given the response to inflation has been to increase interest rates, it is forecast that the United Kingdom will enter a period of recession for approximately 2 years. This may impact both costs through increased demand for services and funding through reductions in local tax receipts.</p>
Central Government funding	<p>The Covid-19 pandemic has left the Government with unprecedented levels of debt, and with interest rates rising the Government will have to take decisions to balance the national budget. This may result in reductions to funding available to the Council over the medium-term.</p> <p>The Government has long promised to reform the allocation of funding to Local Authorities. This is now expected to be enacted from 2024/25 at the earliest. Changes to this methodology could have a negative impact on the funding for the Council if our calculated level of need, and hence future funding allocation reduces significantly.</p> <p>The 'Levelling Up' agenda has the intention of reducing regional disparities. Without additional funding to raise the level of funding for higher need areas there is likely</p>

	to be a movement of funding from 'better' funded areas to those with 'greater' need. This is likely to see funding moved from the South East to those areas assessed as higher need.
Geo-political tensions	The current level of political tension across the globe is interrupting supply chains, contributing to the current high levels of inflation, and creating additional burdens on nation states through increased costs in supporting friendly nations in conflicts and through support to those displaced by conflict. The uncertainty and global impact of these tensions and conflicts means that future inflation forecasts and costs of further support are potentially very unpredictable.
Complexity and demand in Social Care & Client Transport	Social care and Client Transport budgets remain subject to significant variations in terms of both demand and inflation. This is being exacerbated by the pressure on hospitals to discharge patients to free bed-space. This is seeing clients leave hospital with higher needs than in normal times. Whilst all reasonable efforts have been made to predict these pressures based on information available estimates remain volatile and uncertain.
Social Care Provider market & Care Reforms	The Care Act places a statutory duty for local authorities with responsibility for adult social care in managing the market including, where necessary, making provision for the continuity of care if social care providers close. Although the reforms are now delayed the move to a Fair Cost of Care has seen an increase in fees, however market sustainability remains a concern.  In Children's Social Care the national market has become sub-optimal, with demand significantly outpacing supply. This has contributed significantly to increasing placement costs in the current year. Whilst these are expected to continue in the short-term, this draft budget assumes a partial rebalancing of supply and demand in the medium-term.
The Covid-19 pandemic	The Covid-19 pandemic continues to present a risk to the Council's budgets. Whilst this risk has reduced from previous years, new variants and further lockdowns



	<p>and supporting interventions continue to present a risk to the budget proposals made.</p> <p>The global nature of the economy means that the council is still exposed to the impacts of Covid outbreaks around the world.</p> <p>In addition new changes to demand for services are continuing to arise as a consequence of the pandemic.</p>
Long-term societal change	<p>The pandemic required immediate changes to the way we all live our lives. Whilst some of these were short-lived, others persist as both businesses and individuals consider how they wish to live and work in the future. The medium-term impacts on local economic activity are still unclear.</p>

9.3 A robust risk management approach will be taken to monitor, manage and mitigate these risks through the delivery of these draft budget plans.

9.4 Whilst the revenue budget proposals within this report include increased reserves and contingencies against these increased risks, our General Fund (non-allocated) balances are also at a reasonable level (approximately 10% of Net Operating budget). These balances are held against the risk of unforeseen events and provide a strong buffer against unexpected events. Close management of these risks is required to ensure the sustainability of the Council.

## **10. Reserves and Contingencies**

10.1 Contingency budgets are held primarily to act as a mitigation for risks within the budget, and to hold budgets corporately until such time as they can be allocated to the appropriate Portfolio budgets. Within these risks is the possibility that proposed budget changes cannot be delivered (either fully or partially) or that changes to the proposals need to be made in order to mitigate individual risks which are identified as the parameters of proposals are progressed.

## **11. Legal and financial implications**

11.1 This report is fundamentally about the financial position of the Council and implications are covered within the body of the report.

## **12. Equalities**

- 12.1 When considering the budget it is necessary to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 which are to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 12.2 There are a number of budget proposals that may impact on service users. The impacts of those proposals, both positive and negative, are considered in a number of ways. These can include engagement and consultation and equality impact assessments (EqIAs) both new and updated/reviewed to identify any equalities issues which need to be considered as part of the decision making process. As well as the statutory protected groups, EqIAs will consider the impacts on further vulnerable groups, identify mitigations and improvement measures as well as feeding into a cumulative impact assessment for the Council.
- 12.3 At this stage the majority of the draft proposals are at a high level, and we are unable to ascertain how they may or will specifically impact on our communities and the people within them until the proposals are more detailed. We are however aware that reductions in services or increases in fees or charges are more likely to impact on those who are already vulnerable, including older people, those with disabilities, carers, those facing financial difficulty and those in more deprived areas of the authority. Where the proposals will deliver service improvements, changes to services or targeted interventions these will also impact on those groups.
- 12.4 Once draft proposals are agreed and the further options and parameters identified the proposals will each be subject to their own EqIAs, consultation and assessment procedures to allow all relevant factors to be taken into account.

## **13. Corporate implications**

- 13.1 Actions resulting from consideration of this report may influence future expenditure in areas of concern / interest.

## **14. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views**

- 14.1 A public consultation on priorities and budgets was conducted between 12<sup>th</sup> October and 20<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

- 14.2 1,805 responses were received, with 1,797 of these responses being from residents. This compares very well with recent response rates (circa 300 in 2021). More than 2/3rds of respondents either agreed with or were not opposed to the proposals presented.
- 14.3 A report on the results of this consultation exercise can be found as **Appendix 4** to this report.

## **15. Next steps and review**

- 15.1 In mid-January the Budget Scrutiny Committee will review and challenge the budget proposals made by each Portfolio Holder and make recommendations on potential changes to the budget.
- 15.2 Following the announcement of the Final Local Government Settlement, the implications of these announcements will be considered, and amendments may be required to the draft budget. Options will be discussed and agreed by officers and members and any changes presented as part of the final budget.
- 15.3 The final budget will be presented to Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023, and then the Full Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023.

## **16. Background papers**

Appendix 1 – Revenue Budget.

Appendix 2 – Capital programme.

Appendix 3 – Detailed revenue budget changes.

Appendix 4 – Budget consultation results.

Appendix 5 – Schedule of proposed Fees & Charges.

## **17. Your questions and views (for key decisions)**

- 17.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)