

S151 Officer Commentary on Liberal Democrat Group Amendment to Proposed 2021/22 Budget

This note reviews the Liberal Democrat amendment. The amendment is made to the proposals set out in the final recommendations of the Executive to the Council in Document DL.

It is important to note the following:

- The proposal produces a balanced budget for 2021/22.
- The proposal includes some amended proposals for recurring and one-off investments, the funding of these has been considered and reflected within the proposal.
- All proposals have been specifically costed and are therefore deemed to be sufficiently robust estimates to be included in the budget.
- The proposal is balanced in 2021/22 only by the use of £10.332m of reserves. This figure is an additional £3.937m above the Executive's proposals, however it should be noted £3m of this is proposed as invest to save and therefore the net draw down upon reserves is considered appropriate from s151 perspective.
- The redirection of funds from reserves has been based on the utilisation of the Transition & Risk Reserve, and for such to be on an 'invest to save' basis, the proposal is consistent with the purpose of this reserve and is therefore considered appropriate from a s151 perspective.
- There are no proposed uses of the General Fund or Corporate Unallocated Reserves which are the prime focus of my s151 report.
- The proposed re-direction of the Strategic Investment Capital budget would need to be on an invest to save basis to mitigate any additional revenue costs. Detailed proposals would be subject to review by Project Appraisal Group (as with all capital schemes) to ensure this was achieved.

On this basis, the amendment is sufficiently robust for consideration in setting the Council's budget for 2021/22, and the judgement on the adequacy of reserves, as set out in the s151 report (Document DI) to this Council, remains unchanged.

The revised Appendix A of Document DL consistent with this amendment has been provided, along with additional tables quantifying the amendments.

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