

Corporate Policy & Resources Committee

9th December 2024



Title	<i>Corporate Policy and Resources - Budget, Fees and Charges, Capital bids, Revenue Growth and Savings for 2025/26</i>
Purpose of the report	To note
Report Author	<i>Mahmud Rogers Joint Financial Services Manager</i>
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	<i>n/a</i>
Corporate Priority	Resilience
Recommendations	<i>Committee is asked to note the draft initial Budget, Fees and Charges schedule, Capital items, Revenue Growth and Savings items for 2025 -26 Budget for Corporate Policy and Resources</i>
Reason for Recommendation	<i>Councils have a statutory duty to balance their budgets. It is important that we take a medium-term approach in ensuring that we can take action sufficiently early to ensure the Council's Revenue Budget remains financially sustainable.</i>

1. Summary of the report

What is the situation	Why we want to do something
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A robust budget planning process helps organisations to manage their resources with economy, efficiency and effectiveness Once the Outline Budget has been considered by this Committee it is anticipated that further savings across the Committee will need to be identified and that Committees will be asked to address this in the January/February cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have a robust and sustainable 2025/26 budget that meets the needs of the service and provides a resilient financial position to the Council as a whole. The 2025/26 Budget planning process commenced in May 2024 and must be completed and approved by Council in February 2025.
This is what we want to do about it	These are the next steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee reviews and agrees revenue and capital growth & savings bids, fees & charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the Outline Budget and preparation of the whole budget for Committee

- 1.1 This report seeks to present the *Budget, Fees and charges, Capital, and Savings items for Corporate Policy and Resources*. The purpose is to give the Committee an early opportunity to comment and shape the Budget before it is further refined after Christmas.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 The attached appendixes give full detail of the Budget, Fees and Charges, Capital bids, Revenue Growth and Savings proposed.

Fees and charges

- 2.2 A general uplift in discretionary fees and charges of 4% has been applied as the default, except where managers have undertaken benchmarking and provided a rationale for a different uplift, with figures rounded as per the direction from February 2023 Corporate Policy and Resources.

Revenue Growth and Savings Bids

- 2.3 The two larger revenue growth bids relate to a discretionary counter fraud service and provision of the statutory internal audit service. On the savings side, a £567k expected reduction in pension payments, £97k expected reduction in electricity and gas costs, £63k savings from the restructure of Customer Services, and £60k from the lease renewal for Knowle Green Nursery (£80k in 2026/27).

Capital Bids

- 2.4 There is a £1.32m capital growth bid for the Eclipse leisure centre car park solar canopy installation, £375k required for replacement of work laptops and related equipment, £252k for new Elmsleigh Centre lifts, and £200k for renewal of existing water filtration equipment for Lammas Recreation Ground Splashpad.
- 2.5 The splashpad opens at the start of May (first bank holiday) and closes 2nd weekend in September. During a warm, sunny weekend or during the summer opening times we can see 250+ children using it throughout the day

3. Options analysis and proposal

- 3.1 The Committee has the opportunity to comment on any of the fees and charges, savings or growth items

4. Financial management comments

- 4.1 The higher the proportion of growth items accepted at this stage and the lower the proportion of savings items accepted at this initial stage of the Budget the more savings are likely to be asked of the Committee in the January cycle. Equally if the proposed fees and charges are trimmed back more income or savings will need to be found elsewhere.

5. Risk management comments

- 5.1 When considering savings proposals, we need to consider the risk of any adverse impact on service delivery capacity.

6. Procurement comments

- 6.1 n/a

7. Legal comments

- 7.1 n/a

8. Other considerations

8.1 n/a

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 When savings involve reductions to service appropriate Equality Impact Assessments need to be undertaken.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

10.1 n/a

11. Timetable for implementation

11.1 Any steer received from the Committee will be fed into the next stage of refining the Budget.

12. Contact

12.1 Mahmud Rogers, Joint Financial Services Manager
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Background papers: There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - CPRC - Capital Growths Bids 15.11.24

Appendix 2 - Corporate Policy & Resources - Fees and Charges 8.11.24

Appendix 3 - CPRC - Revenue Growth Bids 15.11.24

Appendix 4 - CPRC - Savings 15.11.24

Appendix 5 – CPRC Fees and charges budget summary