

Proposed Budget Amendments – 29 February 2024

Item 6 Capital Strategy Financial Years 2024 - 2034

Minority Group Proposed Amendments

Proposer: Cllr. Marsh

Secunder: Cllr. Abbs

1. Original Text:

Falkland Primary School – Classroom replacement budget

Proposed amendment:

Move £2m from 25/26 to 24/25 to enable this essential work to start without further delays.

Section 151 Officer opinion on the implications for the budget:

The funding could be moved from year 2 to year 1, with the majority of this movement being non West Berkshire Council borrowing. It would leave a residual £0.37m of Council funding to be moved, which would be an additional revenue cost of approximately £0.03m for the 2025-26 budget.

2. Original Text:

Reference	Project	Amount / £m
109	Corporate Storage Systems & Attached Network	0.15
112	Refresh Multi Functional Device Fleet	0.17
113	Corporate Database Server Replacement	0.075
124	Digitalisation Infrastructure/ ICT Allocation	0.05
150	Refresh DC A/C & Generator	0.1
216	Provision of full fibre broadband to schools	0.28
35	Expansion of Berkshire Records Office. Reading	2.508
217	A capital budget to purchase items for the West Berkshire Museum Collection	0.01

Proposed amendment:

2a) To remove the following items for the capital budget whilst cloud options are investigated (total £0.375m):

Lines:

- 109
- 113
- 124
- 150

Section 151 Officer opinion on the implications for the budget:

This option can be investigated and would lead to a £0.015m saving if these were removed with no new revenue costs; however, all experience of moving to cloud based services has been for an increased revenue cost. Moving all of these facilities into the cloud would have a very strong likelihood of increased cost, and deliverability for the start of April would be very difficult with procurement and contractual considerations. It is not recommended for there to be any net increase to revenue costs given the current financial position of the Council.

2b) Change MFD procurement to replace on failure (allow for 1-2 machines to fail in 2024-25) - £0.17m

Section 151 Officer opinion on the implications for the budget:

The ongoing revenue saving from this would be £0.013m. This proposal would increase risk of failure even further. The parts for repairs are from 2nd hand stock and there are increasing revenue costs requiring much larger levels of support. The removal of this budget could result in increased revenue costs depending on the level of failure of the MFDs (Multi-Functional Devices).

2c) Remove all purchasing options from museum – instead allow long term loans from interest parties - £0.01m

Section 151 Officer opinion on the implications for the budget:

This budget could be removed and would lead to a revenue saving of £0.001m. The Council is below the minimum level of reserves so any proposal to increase income or savings levels will improve this position.

2d) Investigate alternative to Full Fibre in schools - £0.28m

Section 151 Officer opinion on the implications for the budget:

This project is from external funding; it could be removed but would not result in a saving to the Council due to this.

2e) Defer extra storage of paper for minimum of 1 year whilst we lobby for digital alternative - £2.508m

Section 151 Officer opinion on the implications for the budget:

The revenue budget saving by pausing the project will be £0.185m across the six Berkshire Councils. The project is run through WBC, but requires funding from all six of the Berkshire Councils. To pause this project at this stage would mean returning to the other Councils to agree the pause (which may not be forthcoming) and see likely increased costs to the project overall due to further delay. The National Archives expects local hard copy archive collections to continue to grow until the end of this century and we need to provide secure sustainable storage for archives of importance to local communities, through joint provision in Berkshire. West Berkshire Council (WBC) as the lead authority is responsible for managing this project to extend the current building and the arrangement allows WBC to maintain an archive service at highly cost-effective provision to the community.

Item 7 Revenue Budget 2024-25

Conservative Group Proposed Amendments

Proposer: Cllr. Mackinnon

Seconder: Cllr. Boeck

Original Text:

Chargeable Garden Waste (£100k investment – to reduce charge to £55)

Proposed amendment:

1. Remove the saving from reducing the garden waste charge by £3, and instead increase the charge by £3, generating £201k extra income compared to the proposed budget
2. Reduce the number of Executive allowances payable from 10 to 9, saving £10k (so £211k in total)
3. Remove the savings of:
 - FTE in the Emotional Health Academy (£45k);
 - Planning Enforcement resource (£46k); and
 - reducing bridge maintenance (£80k).

Total £171k

4. Balance of £40k to increase the General Fund

Section 151 Officer opinion on the implications for the budget:

This proposal has a net positive financial impact of £40k on the proposed budget to Full Council. The Council is below the minimum level of reserves so any proposal to increase income or savings levels will improve this position.

Minority Group Proposed Amendments

Proposer: Cllr. Taylor

Seconder: Cllr. Culver

Original Text:

Chargeable Garden Waste (£100k investment – to reduce charge to £55)

Proposed amendment:

To cancel the reduction in the Green Bin Charge by £3 per annum and retain the existing charge.

To retain the Green bin labelling that indicates that the Green bin charge has been paid (£43k).

To transfer the saving from the above (£57k) to the Adult Social Care transport budget.

Section 151 Officer opinion on the implications for the budget:

This proposal does not have a net impact on the proposed budget to Full Council. The Council is below the minimum level of reserves so any proposal to increase income or savings levels will improve this position.