

Public Document Pack
GOVERNANCE, STRATEGY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY BOARD
06/02/2025 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Aslam, Harkness, Iqbal, Kenyon (Substitute), Kouser (Substitute), Lancaster, Moores (Vice-Chair) and Rustidge

Also in Attendance:

Chris Kelsall	Assistant Director of Finance (Capital & Transformation)
Lee Walsh	Finance Manager - Capital and Treasury
Vickie Lambert	Finance Manager
Andrew Mather	Constitutional Services

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ibrahim (Councillor Kouser substituting), Hughes and Williamson (Councillor Kenyon Substituting)

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

5 **LIBERAL DEMOCRATS BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSALS 2025/26**

Consideration was given to a report outlining the Liberal Democrat Budget Amendment Proposals for 2025/26. The report presented the suggested amendments to the Administration's Budget proposals and offered forward-looking proposals to achieve savings in future years.

Councillor Al-Hamdani, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats and Shadow Cabinet Member for Value for Money and Sustainability, introduced the report and highlighted the challenges posed by the tight budget timeframe. The Liberal Democrat proposals identified additional savings of £0.645m for investment in 2025/26 and a further £0.340m in 2026/27, with suggested additional budget allocations for Youth Services, Crime and Safety, Highways, and Green Spaces. Budget reductions were proposed across several areas, including mileage budgets, Trade Union Facilities, car allowances, stationery, training budgets and additional vacancy management.

The report also proposed significant changes to the Capital Programme to increase capital investment in Council owned temporary accommodation which was intended to reduce reliance on more costly alternatives and deliver medium-term

revenue savings, and a platform to increase revenue savings further in the future.

The Director of Finance had confirmed in the report that the budget amendments were robust and deliverable but noted the inherent risks of alternative proposals due to limited time for risk assessment.



Resolved:

1. That the Liberal Democrat budget reduction proposals be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

6

CONSERVATIVE GROUP BUDGET PROPOSALS 2025/26

A report was submitted presenting Conservative Group proposals for amendments to the Administration's Budget for 2025/26. Councillor Quigg attended and took questions on the proposals, emphasising the Group's commitment to freezing Council Tax and making efficiency savings.

The proposals included restructuring District Partnerships, reducing Communications costs, introducing an additional vacancy management factor, and reducing executive pay. The Conservative Group also proposed capital investments in Royton, an Opportunity Zone initiative, highways, and a Saddleworth Health Centre.

The Director of Finance had assessed the proposals and expressed concerns in the report regarding the long-term impact of freezing Council Tax and the feasibility of proposed savings and considered the risk level for the proposals was high.

Resolved: That Conservative Budget Amendment Proposals be not recommended to the Cabinet for consideration.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.45 pm