



## COUNCIL

**Meeting: Thursday, 22nd February 2024 at 6.00 pm  
in Civic Suite, North Warehouse, The Docks, Gloucester, GL1 2EP**

## ADDENDUM

The following items although provided for on the agenda front sheet were not available at the time of dispatch:

<b>7.</b>	<b>FINAL BUDGET PROPOSALS (INCLUDING MONEY PLAN AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME) (PAGES 5 - 30)</b>  To consider the report of the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources seeking approval of the council's Money Plan and Budget Proposals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accepted Revisions to the Budget</li><li>• Liberal Democrat Group Amendments</li><li>• Labour Group Amendments</li><li>• Community Independent Group Amendments</li><li>• Revised versions of the report and appendices 1, 2 and an extract of 6.</li></ul>
<b>8.</b>	<b>COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2024/25 (PAGES 31 - 38)</b>  To consider the report of the Leader of the Council concerning the setting of Council Tax for 2024/25.
<b>9.</b>	<b>NOTICES OF MOTION (PAGES 39 - 40)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conservative Amendment to Notice of Motion (3) from the Community Independent Group.</li></ul>

Yours sincerely

**Jon McGinty**  
**Managing Director**

## NOTES

### Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

The duties to register, disclose and not to participate in respect of any matter in which a member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest are set out in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

Disclosable pecuniary interests are defined in the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 as follows –

<u>Interest</u>	<u>Prescribed description</u>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the previous 12 months (up to and including the date of notification of the interest) in respect of any expenses incurred by you carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract which is made between you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (or a body in which you or they have a beneficial interest) and the Council (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the Council's area.  For this purpose "land" includes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for you, your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the Council's area for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) – (a) the landlord is the Council; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you, your spouse or civil partner or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where – (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the Council's area and

(b) either –

- i. The total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
- ii. If the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

For this purpose, “securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

NOTE: the requirements in respect of the registration and disclosure of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and withdrawing from participating in respect of any matter where you have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest apply to your interests and those of your spouse or civil partner or person with whom you are living as a spouse or civil partner where you are aware of their interest.

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For further details and enquiries about this meeting please contact Tanya Davies, 01452 396125, [tanya.davies@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:tanya.davies@gloucester.gov.uk).

For general enquiries about Gloucester City Council's meetings please contact Democratic Services, 01452 396126, [democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@gloucester.gov.uk).

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If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions:

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building; gather at the assembly point in the car park and await further instructions;
- Do not re-enter the building until told by a member of staff or the fire brigade that it is safe to do so.

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## Accepted Revisions to the Budget

***Following discussions between Group Leaders, the Administration has revised the budget to include the following revisions proposed by Opposition Groups:***

1. Liberal Democrat Group and Labour Group proposal to remove the proposed increase to charges for bulky waste collections at a cost of £3,500.

### ***Agreed Action***

The Money Plan has been amended to reduce income inflation line, removing the £3,500 expected additional income from the proposed £1 increase to the Bulky Waste Fee, this reduces the transfer to the General Fund by £3,500 (see revised Appendix 1) and the Fees and Charges Book has been revised (see revised Appendix 6 extract).

2. Labour Group proposal to introduce a publicity and promotion poster campaign to create public awareness of the financial support and benefits the council offers to people struggling with increasing Cost of Living expenses at an estimated cost of £5,000.

### ***Agreed Action***

The Money Plan has been amended, adding a new base budget pressure of £5,000 and reducing the transfer of funds to the General Fund by £5,000 (see revised Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

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# **Gloucester City Council Budget 2024/25**

## **Liberal Democrat Group amendments**

### **Amendment 1 – Garden Waste Collections 11 months per year**

Improve the garden waste collection service by operating it 11 months a year rather than 10 months a year – additional cost £35,000 per annum.

### **Amendment 2 – Tree Watering**

Establish a reserve of £25,000 to cover the cost of hiring a water bowser and staff over a 12-week period during the summer, if required, to water young trees on council land during hot dry periods.

### **Amendment 3 – Graffiti Removal Fund**

Establish a £20,000 reserve for the removal of graffiti from prominent places across the city.

### **Amendments 1 to 3 annual cost £80,000 to be funded by**

£37,500 additional central government grant within the final LG settlement.

£42,500 to come from the £900,000 environmental insurance reserve.

### **Amendment 4 – Water Refills**

Create an initial budget of £15,000 for the delivery of at least 3 water bottle refill units at public locations in central Gloucester starting with Kings Square. Funded by creating a capital budget from future capital receipts.

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Labour Group  
Budget Amendments 2024 / 25

1. Remove the proposed charge for replacement Wheelie Bins.

Cost: £55,000.00

2. Obtain a suitable software package to enable the council to identify, target and offer financial support and benefits to people most in need and struggling with increasing Cost of Living expenses.

Cost: £20,000.00

Total cost of Amendments:

£75,000

Funded by:

1.Extra Funding from Local Government Settlement

£32,500.00

2.Transfer from Reserves

£42,500.00

£75,000.00

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# **Community Independent Group**

**20.02.2024**

## **Gloucester City Council Budget Amendment**

**Proposer A. Chambers**

**Seconder B. O Donnell**

**Based on the General Fund Summary 2024-2025 the council will be in arrears of £7,150.00.**

**The City Council has already looked to take the VAT Shelter funding for earmarked reserves and raid the full balance of the earmarked reserves.**

**Earmarked reserves is a budget equalisation – This reserve was established to provide a buffer with which to deal with the uncertainties in the forward financial planning.**

**It is proposed to utilise this reserve in 2023/24 to contribute towards the significant cost pressures the Council has seen this year, such as from temporary housing and inflationary pressures. This earmarked reserve was set up for this purpose and will reduce the annual impact on the overall General Fund position of the Council.**

**Therefore, the city council is already forecast to operate at a loss, and has no buffer left to facilitate any unidentified significant cost pressures.**

**Therefore it is imperative that the council is financially well and spending tax payers money correctly. If a private business was trading at a loss they have a legal responsibility to close the business.**

**Statutory Services are struggling and these are legally required by law.**

**Culture is not a statutory requirement and therefore needs to be addressed as such.**

**Below is a breakdown of BlackFriars and Guildhall showing the sites separately, each site is operating at a significant loss to the tax payer.**

<b>Culture</b>		
<b>2024-25 Budget</b>		
Type	Guildhall	Blackfriars
111EE: Employees	730,086.84	207,004.28
112PR: Premises	147,750.00	54,350.00
113TR: Transport	200.00	
114SS: Supplies and Services	424,820.00	71,300.00
115TPP: Third Party Payments	186,600.00	5,500.00
121GC: Grants and Contributions	(254,000.00)	
122FC: Fees and Charges	(208,500.00)	(130,000.00)
123IN: Other Income	(685,281.00)	(90,000.00)
<b>Total</b>	<b>341,675.84</b>	<b>118,154.28</b>

Culture portfolio is costing the Gloucester Tax Payer £2,229,641.00 loss each year. Blackfriars and Guildhall are set to continue to make losses based on their cash for the next 2 years.

Private cinema, bar and wedding venues when operated as a private business establishment are financially successful, employing people, generating a profit and servicing the community. My motion is for the City Council to sublet these premises to private businesses so that a profit can be generated for the business, they can be ran successfully by a private director and the premises can be fully maximised for the community. Furthermore, rental sublets for similar premises are around Guildhall £50,000 - £65,000.00 per annum and Blackfriars Wedding Venue £35,000.00 - £40,000.00 per annum. This will therefore generate an income to the Gloucester Tax Payer of circa £85,000.00 to £105,000.00 per annum.

Furthermore, the deficit of the Guildhall & Blackfriars Wedding Venue costs the Gloucester Tax payer £459,830.00 a year in lost Tax payers money. It has continually made significant losses year on year and has not been able to at least break even.

Therefore, the total cost for the Gloucester Tax Payer for the Guild Hall & Blackfriars is £564,830.12

This money should be invested in emergency accommodation. Currently the city council is forecast to lose £1,577,300.00 on premises costs to support emergency accommodation such as hotels costs etc, which Government grants cover in some cases 10%- 20% of these costs.

The £564.830.12 would purchase around 10 x Emergency housing newbuild pods, these are carbon neutral housing pods, made and manufactured locally in Gloucester, built by serving offenders and ex-offenders. And offer a combined yearly electric and heating bills of around £350 per year per unit.

Currently emergency housing costs to hotels in some circumstances cost the Gloucester tax payer £200.00 - £240.00 per night. 365 days in a year at £240.00 is £87,600.00 for one individual.

Therefore, 10 x individuals at £87,600.00 per year is a cost to the Gloucester Tax Payer of £876,000.00 per year. Therefore saving £477,230.12 to the Gloucester Tax Payer per year and on going savings per year of £876,000.00

#### **Year On Year Saving**

**Year 1 = £876,000.00 – Minus cost of 10 x New build pods = £564,830.12 = £477,230.12**

**Year 2 = £876,000.00**

**Year 3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10 = £876,000.00 per annum**

**Year 10 SAVINGS OF £8,195,169.80 at a 10 year period.**

Furthermore, Gloucester City Council can purchase more pods with the generated saved income, and the on going saving of not facilitating the financially failing Guild hall & Blackfriars, while generating a on going lease income from these units while they remain functioning for the community.

Moreover to saving £8,195,169.80 over a 10 year period. Gloucester City Council will own outright a minimum of 10 x new build pods which are carbon neutral and are A+ EPC rated.

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# Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Cabinet Council	22 January 2024 7 February 2024 22 February 2024
Subject:	Money Plan 2024-29 & Budget Proposals 2024/29	
Report Of:	Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources	
Wards Affected:	All	
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework: Yes
Contact Officer:	Greg Maw, Head of Finance and Resources Greg.maw@gloucester.gov.uk	
		Tel: 01452 396422
Appendices:	1. Money Plan 2024/25 to 2028/29 2. Budget Pressures & Savings 3. Budget Efficiencies & Savings Programme 4. Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29 5. Budget Book 2024/25 6. Fees & Charges 2024/25 7. Budget Consultation	

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To review the Council's Money Plan for recommendation to Council.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE to RECOMMEND** to Council that:

- (1) the proposals for the 2024/25 budget included in this report be approved.
- (2) it be noted that consultation has been undertaken on budget proposals.

- 2.2 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the proposals for the 2024/25 budget included in this report be approved.
- (2) it be noted that consultation has been undertaken on budget proposals.

### 3.0 BUDGET ASSESSMENT OF THE SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 3.1 In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) must report on the following matters:

- 1) the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations, and

2) the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

- 3.2 The Head of Finance and Resources as Section 151 Officer confirms the robustness of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

#### **4.0 Introduction**

- 4.1 The Money Plan sets out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and presents indicative budgets and Council Tax levels for the medium term. It covers the General Fund Revenue Budget, the Capital Programme and Earmarked Reserves. It also comments on the significant financial risks facing the Council in the forthcoming years and explains what the Council is doing to reduce those risks.

- 4.2 The main objectives of the Money Plan are to:

- Explain the financial context within which the Council is set to work over the medium term;
- Provide a medium-term forecast of resources and expenditure;
- Identify the financial resources needed to deliver the Council's priority outcomes, in line with the Council's plan;
- Achieve a stable and sustainable budget capable of withstanding financial pressures;
- Achieve a balanced base budget, minimising the use of balances to meet recurring baseline spending, with the General Fund balance being maintained at a minimum of 10% of net expenditure by the end of the plan period;
- Where possible, additional investment and spending decisions will be made to reflect Council priorities and strategic commitments, with disinvestment and budget savings being made in non-priority areas; and
- Ensure capital financing is established at a level that maintains ongoing robustness in the capital programme.

#### **5.0 The Local Government Finance Environment**

- 5.1 The Council's Money Plan provides the framework within which revenue spending decisions can be made over the medium term. It is reviewed and updated on an annual basis to consider any alterations that may be required as a result of changed circumstances. The Money Plan covers a five-year period up to 2028/29.

- 5.2 Local Government continues to face a tough financial outlook, with funding pressures set to continue. The Local Government Finance Settlement for Gloucester City Council in recent years has seen unprecedented reductions in settlement funding assessment.

- 5.3 The current high inflation/interest rate and cost of living crisis are placing significant pressure on the Council's revenue budgets. The plan has made best estimates on the ongoing implications for the Council during these challenging times. The Money Plan and budget for 2024/25 continues to review any implications on income streams.

- 5.4 On the 22 November 2023 the Chancellor made his autumn statement setting out the Fiscal Plan for the public finances, and the announcement was accompanied by an assessment from the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR).

The announcement including the following:



- Business rates multiplier. The multipliers will be de-coupled in 2024-25 to freeze the small business rating multiplier and to index the standard multiplier. Although likely to add complexity to the settlement, it should not significantly affect funding received by local authorities.
- 75% Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) discounts will continue for a further year.
- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates will be raised to the 30% percentile of local market rents from April 2024. No direct impact on local authorities but this should indirectly reduce pressure on temporary accommodation.
- Local authorities will be able to increase planning fees for applications from larger businesses (to recover the full costs) but will have to return fees if timelines not achieved.

No new funding has been announced for local authorities beyond the increases that were previously announced. Additional funding for the NHS and adult social care announced in the Autumn Statement 2022 has been “reaffirmed”, as we expected. The movement in local government Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL) is to accommodate the additional funding for the extension of the 75% Retail, Hospitality and Leisure discount and the additional section 31 to compensate authorities for the decision to freeze the small business rating multiplier.

Looking further ahead, prospects for local government finance settlements in the next spending review period look very tight indeed. There is no change in the overall planned increase in Resource Departmental Expenditure (RDEL) of 1% in real terms. But that means real-terms cuts for unprotected services, including most of local government. The Chancellor is looking to put more pressure on the public sector, with a target of 0.5% annual productivity improvements. This could provide justification for some of those real-terms cuts in future years.

- 5.5 One significant risk continuing for the Council is the high cost of borrowing since June 2022. With the Council’s ongoing Kings Quarter regeneration programme in progress there remains risk of increased revenue pressures. In 2024/25 these risks have been mitigated through the use of Leveling Up Funding and income as part of the development. Forecasts do expect borrowing costs to return to more sustainable levels in 2025/26 however this is something our treasury management will need to monitor closely. If this is not the case future plans will need to address these interest rate pressures.

#### Local Government Finance Settlement 2024/25

- 5.6 The Government published the provisional local government finance settlement for 2024-25 on 18 December 2023. A Policy Statement (5 December 2023) had already announced the key principles that ministers intended to use in the provisional settlement, and these remained unchanged in the settlement announcement.

The settlement was broadly as expected following the previous weeks Policy Statement announcement.

- It is a one-year settlement for 2024-25.
- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) has been uplifted by 6.62%, as expected, though this was from a low starting level so only equates to an additional £0.017m.
- The Services Grant component which was only introduced 2022/23 is significantly lower than expected, a £0.125m reduction from 2023/24.

- The 3% Core Spending Power Funding Guarantee promised by Government to every authority has been calculated as expected. In 2024-25 for the Council this has been calculated as zero as a result of the higher NHB allocation.
- Core Spending Power assumes that authorities apply the maximum increase in Council Tax, and that tax base rises in line with the 4-year average for the authority.
- An additional year of NHB allocations has been announced. There is no indication about the future of NHB in 2025-26 and beyond. In 2024/25 this equates to £0.811m.

5.7 The settlement continues to use the 'Core Spending Power' measure. Core Spending Power is made up of the following elements.

#### Settlement Funding Assessments (SFA)

This is made up of:

- Revenue Support Grant

Instead of cutting all SFA by a set percent, Government takes into account the ability to raise Council Tax locally. There are five key variables:

- Funding reductions
- Split of reductions between tiers
- Council Tax Base
- Council Tax Rate
- Lower Tier Grant

#### Council Tax Requirement (CTR)

The Core Spending Power assumes district councils will increase Band D Council Tax by 2.99%. The plan assumes an increase of £2.99%.

#### New Homes Bonus (NHB)

NHB is expected to reduce from £0.811 m in 2024/25 to £0.000m in 2025/26.

### **6.0 Business Rates Retention**

6.1 The Gloucestershire authorities have agreed to continue the pooling arrangements during 2024/25. This scheme increases the business rates retained locally by reducing the levy that is payable to Central Government.

### **7.0 General Fund Revenue Budget - Principles and Key Assumptions**

7.1 The principles underpinning the proposed revenue strategy are:

- Annually, a balanced revenue budget will be set with expenditure limited to the amount of available resources.
- No long-term use of balances to meet recurring baseline expenditure.
- Resources will be targeted to deliver Corporate Plan priorities and value for money. Any additional investment and spending decisions will be made to reflect Council priorities and strategic commitments.
- Maintaining the General Fund balance at approximately 10% of net revenue budget. This assumes a minimum level of £1.7m by the end of the plan.

- v. Year on year savings targets where required to be met by ongoing efficiency gains, income generation and service transformation.

7.2 **Table 1** below, lists the major **assumptions** that have been made over the five years of the strategy:

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
Council Tax base growth	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%	0.75%
Council Tax inflation	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%	2.99%
Inflation – Pay	5%	5%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Inflation – contracts	See para 8.3	5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Inflation – other income	See para 8.4	5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%

## 8.0 **Revenue Budget Increases**

### **Pay and Prices Increases**

- 8.1 A 5% pay award allowance has been included in 2024/25 as a result of the current high inflation. It should be noted that pay awards in Local Government are covered by collective bargaining between employers and trade unions and is not subject to direct control from Central Government.
- 8.2 The pension fund is subject to a triennial actuarial valuation, the most recent of which has been undertaken by Hymans Robertson LLP during 2022, on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council, the pension fund administrator. As a result of the triennial valuation the actuary confirmed that the Council's contribution can be reduced by £0.126m per annum. This still assumes that the Council will be fully funded in line with the current strategy of 17 years. The new contribution rates commenced from April 2023. The plan assumes no further increase in pension contributions.
- 8.3 Prices inflation has been included on selected non-pay items, namely contractual obligations. All other inflationary increases are expected to be absorbed within base budget which represents a real time reduction through efficiency gains. In contrast to previous years rather than place a percentage increase in 2024/25, significant contractual obligations have been reviewed and the plan at Appendix 1 & 2 has included expected pressure in areas such as waste, leisure, utilities, and interest costs.
- 8.4 Prices inflation is included on selected fees and charges for each year of the plan. As with inflation on prices in 2024/25 the increases have been calculated taking into account the cost pressures on the Council. For 25/26 a 5% increase and in subsequent years a 2.5% increase has been assumed.

### **Cost Pressures and Savings**

- 8.5 Cost pressures and savings are included in **Appendix 2** and total a net cost of £0.693m
- 8.6 Significant cost pressures that have been highlighted through budget monitoring are highlighted at **Appendix 2**. Some key pressures are highlighted below:
  - Homelessness Prevention Costs.
  - Interest Costs
  - External Audit Fees

8.7 The budget savings identified in **Appendix 2** for 2024/25 relate to several areas where actions undertaken by the Council have led to savings or income growth. Some of the key areas are highlighted below:

- Food Dock
- Recycling Income
- Pension Contributions
- Direct Cremations
- Temporary Housing acquisitions

## **9.0 Efficiency Savings/Income Generation**

9.1 With the inclusion of assumed settlement figures for 2024/25 and the assumption of further formula grant reductions over the life of the plan, further efficiencies may be required.

9.2 The expected impact of current high inflation and cost of living crisis requires Council to find further efficiencies and savings in 2024/25 through to 2026/27. Appendix 3 provides details of proposed measures for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

## **10. Overall Costs**

10.1 The total costs of the Council (the “Net Budget Requirement”) over the five-year period of the Money Plan change from £17.680m in 2024/25 to £17.869m in 2028/29. Any further spending pressures identified in addition to those detailed in **Appendix 2**, over the five-year period of the Money Plan, will need to be funded by additional efficiencies.

## **11.0 Revenue Funding**

### **Formula Grant / Localised Business Rates / Revenue Support Grant**

11.1 Our current grant from Government for 2024/25 comprises two formula driven components - Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and a retained Business Rates target.

11.2 The Council will expect to receive £0.273m RSG in 2024/25. Up from £0.256m in 2023/24 which is an inflationary-matching increase.

### **New Homes Bonus**

11.3 New Homes Bonus is a grant that is effectively a reward for increasing the number of residential properties within an area.

11.4 The Council will receive £0.811m New Homes Bonus in 2024/25.

### **Council Tax**

11.5 The Local Government Finance Settlement includes Council Tax Requirement (CTR) as part of the Council’s ‘Core Spending Power’. CTR is assumed to grow as part of the settlement as follows:

- an average growth in Council Tax Base, in line with the 4-year average for the authority.
- assumed increase of 2.99%.

Therefore, to maintain CTR in line with Government assumptions the minimum year on year increase should in line with bullet points above.

11.6 The Money Plan assumes an increase in Council Tax of 2.99%.

## **12.0 General Fund Balance**

12.1 The estimated level of the General Fund balance in each financial year is shown in **Appendix 1**. The General Fund level is above the minimum required level by the end of the Money Plan.

12.2 It should also be noted, that although £1.7m is considered an appropriate level of General Fund balances to retain each year, the position should be reviewed if the Council delivers a budget surplus at year end.

12.3 In the financial year 2024/25 it is proposed to increase the General Fund by £0.393m.

## **13.0 Capital Programme and Capital Financing**

13.1 The key financial details on capital expenditure and financing in the revised Money Plan for the 5 years from 2024/25, are shown in detail at **Appendix 4**, and summarised below:

1. Capital programme expenditure of £87.100m (£62.358m in 2022/23). Key projects include:
  - (a) Kings Quarter
  - (b) GL1 / Oxstalls
  - (c) Railway Station Improvements
  - (d) Temporary Housing Provision
2. Capital financing comprises grants, Capital receipts, borrowing, and revenue funding.

13.2 The regeneration of the Kings Quarter has now commenced on site and the Forum development is a significant proportion of the Capital programme and the required borrowing.

13.3 The capital programme assumes the majority of capital financing will be funded through borrowing, the use of current and expected future capital receipts, and external grants. The future financial commitments will be approved based on specific income generating, or revenue saving business cases to fund the cost of the borrowing. The main exceptions to this policy will be essential works on the Council's buildings and ICT systems, which will result in a reduced maintenance liability or potential increase in asset value and ensure delivery of the Council's transformation programme.

13.4 Wherever possible and desirable, additional one-off capital investments on a business case basis will be made, providing corporate objectives are delivered, and financing is available and affordable within existing budgets, or preferably with the provision of a "spend to save" revenue saving on existing budgets.

13.5 The strategy on borrowing is to ensure that any borrowing is only undertaken on a business case basis and is affordable and paid off over the life of the asset.

13.6 **Appendix 4** shows the proposed capital budgets for 5 years from 2024/25 incorporating any carried forward capital budgets and new, approved schemes. The capital programme will be updated for any future additions.

## **14.0 Earmarked Reserves**

- 14.1 The Council has limited Earmarked Reserves with the balance at 31 March 2023 being £4.266m, as shown in the table in 13.4 below. Where earmarked reserves are not ring fenced for a specific use then, if necessary, these reserves may potentially be used to support the General Fund.
- 14.2 The Council faces significant uncertainty from 2026/27 and it is expected there will be a significant reduction in retained funding from business rates when the Government eventually undertake their proposed Fair Funding Review. This Review has been delayed several times and is now not expected to occur prior to 2026. The Council needs to ensure there is sufficient funding in the Business Rates reserve to offset the expected changes when they occur.
- 14.3 During 2024/25 the Council will draw on the appropriate Earmarked Reserves for the delivery of agreed Council activities. However, it is prudent and sensible to maintain and where possible increase the level of earmarked reserves to protect the Council going forward particularly in these uncertain times.
- 14.4 The table provides a forecast position on Earmarked Reserves:

Reserves Forecast		Balance at 31/03/2023	Transfers 2023/24	Forecast 31/03/2024	Transfers 2024/25	Forecast 31/03/2025
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
1	Historic Buildings	53	0	53	0	53
2	Housing Survey	60	0	60	0	60
3	Shopmobility	28	0	28	0	28
4	Regeneration	220	0	220	-159	61
5	Insurance	10	0	10	0	10
6	Land Adoption	874	0	874	0	874
7	VAT Shelter	167	0	167	-131	36
8	Business Rates	733	0	733	0	733
9	Environmental Insurance	900	0	900	0	900
10	Repairs	23	0	23	0	23
11	Planning Strategy	126	0	126	0	126
12	Flooding Works	10	0	10	0	10
13	Lottery	21	0	21	0	21
14	Museum Bequest	305	0	305	0	305
15	Transformation	25	0	25	0	25
16	Budget Equalisation	34	-34	0	0	0
17	Destination Marketing	85	0	85	0	85
18	Homelessness	100	-100	0	0	0
19	Planning Appeals	50	0	50	0	50
20	Communities	18	0	18	0	18
21	Climate Change	66	0	66	0	66
22	Neighbourhood Spaces	12	0	12	0	12
23	Defibrillator	6	0	6	0	6
24	Health Inequalities	340	-230	110	-110	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,266</b>	<b>(364)</b>	<b>3,902</b>	<b>(400)</b>	<b>3,502</b>

1. Reserve will finance the refurbishment of historic buildings in the City.
2. Reserve for housing surveys undertaken every three to four years.

3. Donated funds for shopmobility for use specifically on the shopmobility service.
4. The reserve is intended for the delivery of key regeneration priorities.
5. This reserve is intended to cover possible insurance claims not able to be met from the Insurance Provision
6. The reserve contains contributions received from developers upon the adoption of open space on housing development. The reserve will be used to fund increased grounds maintenance costs in future years.
7. Earmarked for future regeneration and housing projects.
8. A reserve to be used to protect the Council's General Fund from fluctuations in business rates income expected as a result of Fair Funding and Spending Reviews.
9. The Council has ongoing potential environmental liabilities from the housing stock transfer, including potential asbestos work liability and contaminated land.
10. The Council has significant exposure to major repairs which are currently unbudgeted and could be a significant risk. This reserve is intended to assist in offsetting potential future liabilities.
11. A reserve to meet the future costs of the City Plan review.
12. This reserve holds fund for use on future flood prevention capital projects.
13. This reserve holds funding generated by Gloucester Lottery to be distributed to the voluntary sector.
14. This reserve holds funding received via bequest.
15. Reserve for transformation programme.
16. This reserve was established to provide a buffer with which to deal with the uncertainties in the forward financial planning process arising from changes in the funding for local authorities
17. This reserve will meet the delivery of the two year destination marketing plan
18. Reserve will support delivery of the homelessness strategy and implementation of a private landlord scheme
19. Reserve will protect the Council against future planning appeals
20. Reserve future the work of City Safe and Street Aware projects
21. The reserve will contribute to the Councils response to the Climate emergency
22. This reserve will fund improvements to small areas of public open space and community gardens
23. This reserve will be used to procure defibrillators
24. This reserve will meet known and future commitments on the Councils property investments
25. A reserve to meet a joint Health Inequalities programme with the NHS.

## **15.0 Alternative Options Considered**

- 15.1 The Council must set a balanced budget in time to start collecting Council Tax by 1 April 2024. Alternative proposals put forward for budget savings will be considered as part of this process.

## **16.0 Social Value Implications**

- 16.1 There are no social value implications as a result of this report.

## **16.0 Financial Implications**

- 17.1 Contained in the body of the report.

## **18.0 Legal Implications**

- 18.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires a council to set a balanced budget. To do this the Council must prepare a budget that covers not only the expenditure but also the funding to meet the proposed budget. The budget has to be fully funded and the income from all sources must meet the expenditure.
- 18.2 Best estimates have to be employed so that all anticipated expenditure and resources are identified.
- 18.3 Local government legislation requires the Council's S151 officer to make a report to the full Council meeting when it is considering its budget and council tax. The report must deal with the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the reserves allowed for in the budget proposals. This is done so that members will have authoritative advice available to them when they make their decisions
- 18.4 Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 precludes a councillor from voting on a calculation which might affect the calculation of the council's budget if they have an outstanding council tax debt of over two months. If a councillor is present at any meeting at which relevant matters are discussed, they must disclose that section 106 applies and may not vote. Failure to comply is a criminal offence

## 19.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 19.1 Covered in the report. The budget is prepared based on the information available at the time of writing. The budget pressures facing the Council have, as far as possible, been built into the budget.
- 19.2 The risks are set out more fully in the report but in summary centre around the continuing economic situation and the impact this is likely to have on the public sector, driving changes to Government funding in future years and the level of the Council's spend from 2024/25 onwards.
- 19.3 In addition to the risks identified in the report, a list of additional identified risks for both the Draft Money Plan and the Budget for 2024/25, along with the mitigations is also shown below:

Risk Identified	Inherent Risk Evaluation (where 16 represents highest risk)		Proposed measures	Residual Risk Evaluation (where 16 represents highest risk)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee-related costs will be more than assumed</li> <li>Other costs will be more than assumed</li> </ul>	Risk Score	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Figures based on known commitments and estimated future costs. Any further pressures will need to be matched by additional identified savings.</li> </ul>	Risk Score	4
		8			4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pension fund contributions will be higher than expected.</li> </ul>	Risk Score	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The financial plan will continue to be reviewed and updated annually for a five year period, based on known changes and informed by the most recent actuarial triennial valuation.</li> </ul>	Risk Score	4



Risk Identified	Inherent Risk Evaluation (where 16 represents highest risk)		Proposed measures	Residual Risk Evaluation (where 16 represents highest risk)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned budget reductions will not be achieved</li> </ul>	Risk Score	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close monitoring of budgets will be carried out in each financial year.</li> <li>Continuous monitoring of service pressures and ongoing focus on preventative support.</li> </ul>	Risk Score	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income from fees, charges and other sources will not be as high as planned</li> </ul>	Risk Score	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close monitoring of income budgets will be carried out in each financial year.</li> </ul>	Risk Score	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timing of Capital Receipts will be later than anticipated or lower than estimated</li> <li>Timing of Capital payments may be earlier than estimated</li> </ul>	Risk Score	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close monitoring of the timing and payments of capital expenditure/income will be carried out in each financial year. Alternative savings will be identified, or contingency arrangements agreed</li> </ul>	Risk Score	4

## 20.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

20.1 People Impact Assessments will be carried out for each line of the budget savings, to ensure that all relevant considerations are taken into account.

## 21.0 Other Corporate Implications

### 1. Community Safety

None

### 2. Environmental

None

### 3. Staffing

None

## Background Documents:

None.

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	0	1	2	3	4	5
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>1. BASE BUDGET b/fwd</b>	<b>14,280</b>	<b>15,784</b>	<b>17,389</b>	<b>16,773</b>	<b>16,873</b>	<b>17,423</b>
<b>Pay and Price Increases</b>						
Employees pay awards	725	700	500	500	500	500
Employers Pension Costs	(126)					
Cost Inflation	280	714	500	150	150	150
Income Inflation	(351)	(663)	(500)	(150)	(150)	(150)
<b>Revised Base Budget</b>	<b>14,808</b>	<b>16,535</b>	<b>17,889</b>	<b>17,273</b>	<b>17,373</b>	<b>17,923</b>
<b>Cost Pressures/Efficiencies</b>						
Ongoing base pressures	2,410	1,997	(205)	(250)	50	(50)
Ongoing base efficiencies/Income generation	(775)	(843)	(536)	-	-	-
	<b>1,635</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>(741)</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>(50)</b>
<b>2. NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>16,443</b>	<b>17,689</b>	<b>17,148</b>	<b>17,023</b>	<b>17,423</b>	<b>17,873</b>
<b>Sources of Finance</b>						
Revenue Support Grant	256	273	291	656	604	548
Local Council Tax Support Grant	(151)					
Business Rates Retention	6,200	7,200	7,500	5,700	5,757	5,815
To/From Business Rates Reserve				500		
2024/25 Services Grant	150	26	125	-	-	-
3% Funding Guarantee	314	39	513	500	500	500
New Homes Bonus	217	811	-	-	-	-
Council Tax Surplus/(Deficit)	(38)	-	-	-	-	-
Council Tax	8,732	9,052	9,411	9,771	10,145	10,533
<b>3. TOTAL SOURCES OF FINANCE</b>	<b>15,680</b>	<b>17,401</b>	<b>17,840</b>	<b>17,127</b>	<b>17,006</b>	<b>17,396</b>
<b>Budget Surplus/(Shortfall)</b>	<b>(763)</b>	<b>(288)</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>(417)</b>	<b>(477)</b>
<b>4. PROPOSED BUDGET EFFICIENCIES</b>						
Efficiency/Transformation/Income Generation	50	300	375	150	-	-
<b>Revised Budget (Shortfall)/Surplus</b>	<b>(713)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>(417)</b>	<b>(477)</b>
<b>5. REVISED NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT c/fwd</b>	<b>16,393</b>	<b>17,389</b>	<b>16,773</b>	<b>16,873</b>	<b>17,423</b>	<b>17,873</b>
<b>Transfer (to)/from Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>6. Revised Contribution to/(from) General Fund</b>	<b>(349)</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>1,067</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>(217)</b>	<b>(277)</b>
<b>7. GENERAL FUND BALANCE</b>						
Opening Balance	849	500	912	1,979	2,233	2,016
Contribution to/(from) General Fund	(349)	412	1,067	254	(217)	(277)
<b>Closing Balance</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>1,979</b>	<b>2,233</b>	<b>2,016</b>	<b>1,739</b>

## Description

2024/25 2025/26 2026/27 2027/28 2028/29

## Ongoing base budget increases

External Audit Fees	112				
Homelessness Prevention Costs	650				
Interest Costs	555		(250)		
Democratic Services - Election	70	(70)			
Tall Ships	25	(50)		50	(50)
SLC Consultancy	50	(50)			
County Climate Change					
Building Control	30	(30)			
Publicity campaign (awareness of the financial support)	5	(5)			
Minimum Revenue Provision	500				
<b>Total ongoing Cost Pressures</b>	<b>1,997</b>	<b>(205)</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>(50)</b>

## Budget Efficiencies/Income Generation

Pension Backfunding Charges	(482)	(126)			
Homelessness Prevention Savings	(150)				
Property Investment Strategy - Food-Dock	(100)	(50)			
Replacement wheelie bins charge	(55)				
2nd Home Premium Charge		(60)			
Crematorium Direct Cremations	(50)	(50)			
County Climate Change	(6)				
Forum		(250)			
<b>Total Ongoing savings</b>	<b>(843)</b>	<b>(536)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,154</b>	<b>(741)</b>	<b>(250)</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>(50)</b>

## **Bulky Item and Garden Waste Charges**

*All Non Business for VAT purposes, except Bulky Items*

### **2024-25** **Charge**

#### **Bulky Items [Charge inclusive of VAT]**

The City Council provides a bulky item collection service.

##### **General Households**

Up to 3 items

£24.00

Additional items (charge per item)

£9.00

##### **Households in receipt of Council Tax Support or Housing Benefit**

Up to 3 items

£13.00

Additional items (charge per item)

£5.00

#### **Garden Waste**

The City Council provides a fortnightly waste collection service.

The charges cover the period from 1st February to 30th November.

##### **General Households**

£53.00

**Note:** Existing Garden Waste customers are invoiced annually in February each year - the 2024/25 charge above will come into effect from **1 April 2024** for renewals.

### **2024-25** **Charge**

#### **New Developments and Replacement Wheelie Bin Charges (Black or Green)**

The City Council will charge an administration fee for a replacement wheelie bin where it has been damaged or lost at no fault of its contractor.

Administration fee (includes delivery)

140L Bin - Admin fee waived in support of waste reduction strategy

£0

240L Bin

£25

360L Bins

£25

660L Steel Bins

£40

1100L Steel Bins

£40

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<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Council Tax Setting 2024/25</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Greg Maw, Head of Finance &amp; Resources</b>		
	<b>Email: <a href="mailto:greg.maw@gloucester.gov.uk">greg.maw@gloucester.gov.uk</a></b>		<b>Tel: 396422</b>
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Council Tax Resolution</b>		

## FOR GENERAL RELEASE

### 1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To recommend to the Council to pass the resolution as set out in the Appendix 1 to this report relating to the setting of Council Tax for 2024/25. The Council agreed its budget and level of Council Tax for 2024/25 at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that

(1) Approve the statutory Council Tax resolutions as set out in the Appendix 1 to the report.

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Council, earlier in today's meeting, will have determined its budget for the 2024/25 financial year. Having determined the budget, the Council is asked to pass the statutory resolutions relating to Council Tax setting, which will include precepts by the County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire, and Quedgeley Town Council.
- 3.2 The Localism Act 2011 made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and requires the billing authority to calculate a Council Tax requirement for the year, not its budget requirement as previously.
- 3.3 The precept levels of other precepting bodies have been received. These are detailed below:

#### 3.3.1 Quedgeley Town Council

Quedgeley Town Council Precept for 2024/25 is £284,812.67. This results in an average Band D Council Tax figure of £43.08 for 2024/25. This represents an increase of 5.06% on the 2023/24 Band D of £41.01.

#### 3.3.2 Gloucestershire County Council

Gloucestershire County Council has set their precept at £62,922,040. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £1,599.82. This represents an increase of 4.99% on the 2023/24 Band D of £1,523.78

### 3.3.3 Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire

The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire has set their precept at £12,117,002.06. This results in a Band D Council Tax of £308.08. This represents an increase of 4.41% on the 2023/24 Band D of £295.08

## 4.0 Alternative Options Considered

4.1 There are no alternative options available

## 5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 To comply with the statutory requirement to set the Council Tax requirement for the forthcoming year as per the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

## 6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

6.1 The recommendations of the Cabinet are set out in the formal Council Tax Resolution in Appendix 1.

6.2 If the formal Council Tax Resolution at Appendix 1 is approved, the total Band D Council Tax will be as follows:

Authority	2023/24	2024/25	Increase
	£	£	%
City Council	223.48	230.16	2.99%
County Council	1,523.78	1,599.82	4.99%
Police and Crime Commissioner	295.08	308.08	4.41%
Quedgeley	41.01	43.08	5.06%

## 7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 Covered in the report

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

## 8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act) places a duty on this council, as a billing authority, to set an amount of council tax for the different categories of dwellings, according to the band in which the dwelling falls before 11 March each year (section 30 (6) of the Act).

8.2 A notice of the amount set must be published in at least one newspaper circulating in the authority's area within 21 days of the decision.

8.3 Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 precludes a councillor from voting on this decision as a relevant matter, if they have an outstanding council tax debt of over two months, they must disclose that section 106 applies and may not vote. Failure to comply is a criminal offence.

(Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)



## **9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

- 9.1 It is essential that the composite Council Tax rate is set in accordance with the Council tax billing timetable. Any delay would put the Council at risk of not being able to collect the tax in time to make precept payments which would have serious cash flow implications.

## **10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):**

- 10.1 The report is purely financial in nature and therefore a PIA is not required.

## **11.0 Other Corporate Implications**

### Community Safety

- 11.1 There are no specific Community Safety implications.

### Sustainability

- 11.2 There are no specific Sustainability implications.

### Staffing & Trade Union

- 11.3 There are no specific Staffing and Trade Union implications.

## **Background Documents:**

- Council Tax Practice Note 7
- The Local Government Finance Act 1992
- The Local Government Act 2003
- Localism Act 2011

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**Gloucester City Council**

**Council 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024**

**Council Tax Resolution**

1. It be noted that Gloucester City Council has calculated the Council Tax Base 2024/25.
  - (a) 39,330.7 for the whole Council Area as (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (the “Act”) :and
  - (b) 6,610.6 or dwellings in those parts of its area to which Quedgeley Parish precepts relates as.
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish Council precepts) is £ 9,052,434.00
3. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act.
  - (a) £95,795,976 – being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2), (a) to (f) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by the Parish Council.
  - (b) £86,458,730 – being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3), (a) to (d) of the Act.
  - (c) £9,337,247- being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
  - (d) £237.40 - being the amount at 3.(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (paragraph 1. above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (Basic Band D including Parish Council precepts).
  - (e) £284,813 - being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish Council precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (as detailed in paragraph 5. below).
  - (f) £230.16 - being the amount at 3.(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3.(e) above by Item T (sub-paragraph 1.(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Council precepts relate. (Basic Band D excluding Parish Council precepts).

Part of the Council's area (District and Parish combined at Band D)

Parish of Quedgeley	£284,813
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Being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3.(f) above, the amount of the Parish Council precepts relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided by the amount at 1.(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in that part of its area;

(g)

Valuation Bands	Quedgeley Town Council	All other parts of the Council's Area
A	182.16	153.44
B	212.52	179.01
C	242.88	204.59
D	273.24	230.16
E	333.96	281.31
F	394.68	332.45
G	455.40	383.60
H	546.48	460.32

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.(f) by the number which, in proportion set out in Section 36(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4. To note that for the year 2024/25, the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below;

Valuation Bands	Gloucestershire County Council	Police & Crime Commissioner
A	1,066.55	205.39
B	1,244.30	239.62
C	1,422.06	273.85
D	1,599.82	308.08
E	1,955.34	376.54
F	2,310.85	445.00
G	2,666.37	513.47
H	3,199.64	616.16

5. That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

Valuation Bands	Quedgeley Town Council	All other parts of the Council's Area
A	1,454.10	1,425.38
B	1,696.44	1,662.93
C	1,938.79	1,900.50
D	2,181.14	2,138.06
E	2,665.84	2,613.19
F	3,150.53	3,088.30
G	3,635.24	3,563.44
H	4,362.28	4,276.12

6. To note that the relevant basic amount of council tax for the financial year 2024/25, which reflects a 2.99% increase, is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended and the Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) (England) Report 2024/25 and, therefore, the requirement to hold a referendum is not engaged.

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## **CONSERVATIVE GROUP AMENDMENT ITEM 9(3) NOTICE OF MOTION FROM THE COMMUNITY INDEPENDENT GROUP**

~~“City council motion to ensure equality for hidden disabilities and undertake an audit of council equipment and buildings for disabled inclusion and compliance with Part M building regulations.~~

~~This council notes that there are areas of the it is important for the city council that are not to be disability compliant and that there is disability discrimination in many parts. For example the very basic of democracy requires a platform for public speaking. To was evident that the city councils democratic public speaking platform was not all inclusive and that public residents attending the council meeting who were disabled were unable to access the public speaking platform. The public speaking platform/Podium was unable to be reached by the wheel chair users, the speaker platform/podium did not have enough space around it for wheel chair move ability/turning and access, the speaker podium was too high for the wheel chair users to look over when delivering their questions to council. The speaker platform was not adjustable in anyway to suit disabled wheel chair users. This one very important piece of democracy for public speaking was breaching the equality act/ upsetting disabled public speaking residents and putting barriers in place for democracy. It meant that disabled public speakers were not treated the same as able bodied public speakers. Cllr Chambers demanded that the public speaking podium was immediately updated to an all inclusive one.~~

**At the January 2024 council meeting, members of the public were advised in advance of the arrangements for wheelchair users to ask their questions, however, we should and can do more to ensure that all residents can ask questions in the same disability compliant way. Many council buildings already have ramps, lifts and disabled toilet facilities, however regular review of disability compliance should be welcomed.**

This council resolves to:

1. Raise Awareness: Start by raising awareness about hidden disabilities among council members, Council staff, Council subcontractors and a communication campaign to the general public. This can be done through workshops, training sessions, and awareness campaigns.
2. Conduct an Audit: Undertake a comprehensive audit of all council equipment and buildings to assess their accessibility and compliance with Part M building regulations. This audit should include a review of physical access, signage, parking, and other facilities.
3. Consult with Disability Organisations: Engage with disability organisations and advocacy groups to gather insights and recommendations on how to improve accessibility and inclusion for people with hidden disabilities. These organisations can provide valuable expertise and guidance throughout the process.
4. Develop an Inclusion Plan and amend/update existing plans: Based on the audit findings and input from disability organisations, develop an inclusion plan that outlines specific actions and timelines for improving accessibility and inclusion. This plan should address both physical barriers and attitudinal barriers that may exist within the council.

5. Implement Accessibility Measures: Implement the recommendations from the inclusion plan, which may include installing ramps, accessible parking spaces, braille signage, sensory-friendly spaces, and other accommodations to ensure equal access for people with hidden disabilities.
6. Train Staff: Provide training to council staff on disability awareness, inclusive practices, and how to effectively communicate and support individuals with hidden disabilities. This will help create a more inclusive and supportive environment within the council.
7. Monitor and Evaluate: Regularly monitor and evaluate the progress of the inclusion plan to ensure that the implemented measures are effective and meeting the needs of people with hidden disabilities. Make adjustments as necessary based on feedback and ongoing assessments.
8. Educate Councillors **Awareness**: Provide training to councillors on disability awareness, inclusive practices, and how to effectively communicate and support individuals with hidden disabilities. This will help create a more inclusive and supportive environment within the council chamber and interaction with the public.

The city council will consult with legal and accessibility experts to ensure compliance with local regulations/ national equality legislation and best practices.”