



BROMLEY CIVIC CENTRE, STOCKWELL CLOSE, BROMLEY BRI 3UH

TELEPHONE: 020 8464 3333

CONTACT: Graham Walton  
[graham.walton@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:graham.walton@bromley.gov.uk)

DIRECT LINE: 020 8461 7743

FAX: 020 8290 0608

DATE: 26 February 2024

## COUNCIL

**Monday 26 February 2024**

### **4 2024/25 COUNCIL TAX (Pages 3 - 18)**

The following supplementary documents are attached –

- Amended recommendations from the Director of Finance
- Amended recommendations from the Labour Group
- Amended recommendations from the Liberal Democrat Group

***Copies of the documents referred to above can be obtained from***  
***<http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/>***

This page is left intentionally blank

## COUNCIL

26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Report of the Director of Finance re. Item 4 (2024/25 Council Tax)

#### Changes required to the Council Tax Resolution (recommendations from the Executive to Council).

There were no changes to the final Mayoral precept accepted by the London Assembly on 22nd February 2024.

Since the last meeting of the Executive there have been further changes on levies and the final position is shown in recommendation 2.1 (f) below.

Members are requested to note that the 2024/25 Budget includes the impact of the recommended 2024/25 pay award that is subject to Full Council approval (agenda item 7).

The above change will require the following proposed amendments to be made to the recommendations of the Executive:

#### Amended Recommendation (2.1)

- (e) approves a revised Central Contingency sum to reflect the allocation of the pay award, movement of levies and final local government settlement, resulting in a sum of £9,829k;
- (f) approves the following provisions for levies to include in the budget for 2024/25:

	£'000
London Pension Fund Authority	448
London Boroughs Grant Committee	248
Environment Agency (Flood defence etc.)	270
Lee Valley Regional Park	350
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,316</b>

- (g) notes the final position on the GLA precept, as accepted by the London Assembly on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024; and
- (h) Sets a 2% increase in Adult Social Care Precept with a 2.99% increase in Bromley's General Council Tax, compared with 2023/24 (2% increase in Adult Social Care Precept and 2.99% increase in Bromley's General Council Tax) and 8.58% increase in the GLA precept.

This page is left intentionally blank

## Council Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Amendment to Item 4 and Item 5 – 2024/25 Council Tax and Capital Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/289 and Q3 Capital programme Monitoring

**Proposed: Cllr Jeal**

**Seconded: Cllr Adams**

After allowing for the report from the Director of Finance the following amendments are proposed to the recommendations of the Executive set out in the Blue Book on pages 27-134.

The following changes be made to the recommended budget for 2024/25:

#### **Additional recommendations:**

#### **1. Council be recommended to:**

(k) Approve the proposed changes to the revenue budget as detailed in Appendix 1

Subject to the approval of (k) above:

(l) Approve the following changes to the Capital Programme (agenda item 5):

i) The addition of £3,150k for a Children's Home, funded from the Invest to Save earmarked reserve;

ii) The addition of £3,150k for a care home for Adults, funded from the Invest to Save earmarked reserve;

iii) The addition of £123.2m for a social housing scheme on the current Civic Centre site, funded by GLA Grant (£54m), external borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (£58m) and the Invest to Save earmarked reserve (£11.2m);

iv) To not proceed with the planned disposal of the Civic Centre site;

v) The disposal of former 'Top Shop' building;

vi) The drawdown of £8m from the Growth Fund earmarked reserve to cover the net impact on capital financing arising from the change in capital receipts in iv) and v) above;

(m) The detailed proposals relating to the changes in (l) will be reported back to Executive prior to final release of capital resources identified above.

**Amended recommendations:**

**4. Council is recommended to formally resolve as follows:**

(3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):

(a) £663,215k being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.

(b) £463,199k being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates or the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Total £'000
<b><u>Capital programme</u></b>					
<b>Changes to schemes:</b>					
Children's care home (new)	500	2,500			3,000
Adults care home (new)	500	2,500			3,000
Project mgt for care homes	300				300
Housing scheme		61,600	61,600		123,200
	1,300	66,600	61,600	0	129,500
<b>Changes to financing:</b>					
Remove planned disposal of Civic Centre	13,000				13,000
Sale of former 'Top Shop' building	-5,000				-5,000
Growth Fund	-8,000				-8,000
Invest to Save reserve (care homes)	-1,300	-5,000			-6,300
GLA grant		-27,000	-27,000		-54,000
External borrowing		-29,000	-29,000		-58,000
Invest to Save reserve (housing contingency)		-5,600	-5,600		-11,200
	-1,300	-66,600	-61,600	0	-129,500
<b>Net impact</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	FullYear £'000
<b><u>Revenue budget</u></b>					
<b>Impact of capital financing:</b>					
Foregone interest from reserves (Invest to Save for care homes)	45	270	270	270	270
Repayment of Invest to Save (project mgt) inc interest	0	315	0	0	0
	45	585	270	270	270
<b>Impact of new housing scheme:</b>					
Rental income from new housing	0	0	-574	-1,148	-1,148
Old Palace Income	-150	-88	-88	-200	-200
Savings in temporary accommodation	0	0	-1,560	-3,120	-3,120
Housing project financing costs (0%, 50%, 100%, 100%)	0	1,565	3,130	3,130	3,130
	-150	1,477	908	-1,338	-1,338
<b>Reduction in income/growth:</b>					
Cost of Living Contribution- CT Support for all band A-C	1,387	0	0	0	0
Increase lowest pay band to £13.15 (2024 LLW)	7	7	7	7	7
Care leaver 100% council tax support	109	109	109	109	109
Independent travel training	40	40	40	40	40
Rent subsidies for voluntary organisations	0	0	490	490	490
Cost of living contribution to lower paid staff	430	0	0	0	0
Community bulk waste collection	200	207	214	221	221
	2,173	363	860	867	867
<b>Income/savings:</b>					
Savings in fly tipping	-200	-207	-214	-221	-221
Reduction in growth from 3.5% to 3% - dept waste savings	-1,400	-1,400	-1,400	-1,400	-1,400
Central budget cuts: Mayoral office, comms	-250	-250	-250	-250	-250
Contract efficiency Savings (on renewals)	-50	-50	-50	-50	-50
Freeze Members Allowances	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38
Youth Centre Transformation	-80	-284	-284	-284	-284
Reduce Property Team budget following disposals	-50	-100	-200	-200	-200
Childrens Placement saving from Childrens home		-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
Adult Placement savings from Care Home		-1,000	-1,000	-1,000	-1,000
	-2,068	-4,329	-4,436	-4,443	-4,443
Repayment to Invest to Save Reserve (housing and care homes ) - repaid by 2029/30	0	1,904	2,398	4,644	0
<b>Net impact</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-4,644</b>

This page is left intentionally blank



## **Labour's Budget Amendment: Notes and explanation for members**

### **Budget Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

All members are well aware of the mounting budget pressures today, notably in children's care, adult care and housing. The pressures stem from both rising demand and rising costs per user from external providers.

This is a budget amendment designed to tackle these pressures head on. We propose combining cuts with substantial investment – with the council in a position to benefit by £4.6m per year from 2027-28.

#### **Investing in housing, childcare and adult care**

The amendment seeks to invest now to both improve services and reap long term gains to the council's budget. These investments are in three areas – housing, children's care and adult care.

The amendment proposes retaining the Civic Centre site and building social housing on it. With temporary accommodation costs on course from £8,200 per unit a year, past £9,000 in the year ahead, we have projected turning a fast-mounting annual cost into a £1.4 million a year budget gain from 2027-28.

Securing this benefit requires a project of scale and we have modelled a 320-unit project of social housing – funded by £54m of GLA grants, a loan of £58m and £11.2 million of contingencies from Invest to Save.

The amendment applies the same principle to Children's Care and Adult Care. Investing now, at scale, would allow the children's placement saving from new children's homes and the adult placement savings from new care homes each to save the council £1m a year.

We understand council officers have begun feasibility work in these three areas – and our proposals would be subject to their due diligence. But this amendment is about injecting purpose and scale – to maximise both the benefits to residents in securing better services closer to home – and creating more long-term financial stability for Bromley Council.

#### **Council tax relief for Bands A-C and care leavers**

At the same time the amendment seeks to shield those most likely to feel the pain of council tax payments from further rises as the cost-of-living crisis continues – this is achieved by freezing council tax in bands A-C for 2024-25, via council tax support, at a cost of £1.387 million.

The amendment also extends 100% council tax support to care leavers (at a cost of £109,000).

#### **Protecting charities**

This amendment protects charity tenants of the council from paying market rent levels that they cannot afford. It proposes restricting all charity sector tenant rent reviews to inflation increase for two years before applying a 40% social value discount from market valuations from 2026-27 at a cost of £490,000 per year.

### **Savings in Youth Services**

External third sector organisations have shown they can operate youth centres with greater success and at lower costs. The amendment seeks to commission services for six youth centres at an annual cost of £100k each per year – with a saving of £284,000 a year from 2025-26.

### **Additional Savings**

We have identified further savings including:

- Reduction in the growth budget from 3.5% to 3% (£1.4 million per year)
- Central budget cuts (£250,000 per year)
- Providing skips to reduce fly tipping costs (£200,000 per year)

## Council Meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### Amendment to Item 4 – 2024/25 Council Tax

**Proposed: Cllr Ross**

**Seconded: Cllr Ireland**

After allowing for the report from the Director of Finance the following amendments are proposed to the recommendations of the Executive set out in the Blue Book on pages 27-134.

The following changes be made to the recommended budget for 2024/25:

**Additional recommendations:**

(k) Approve the proposed changes to the revenue budget as detailed in appendix 1 including the following:

- i) carry forward of the £411k business rate levy adjustment for 2023/24
- ii) contribution from Invest to Save earmarked reserve of £900k
- iii) the implementation of the 100% Council Tax second home premium from 2025/26

**Amended recommendations:**

**4. Council is recommended to formally resolve as follows:**

(3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):

- (a) £664,466k being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
- (b) £464,450k being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates or the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

This page is left intentionally blank

## Appendix 1. Funding Sources - Liberal Democrat Budget Amendments February 2024

	2024/25 £'000	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	Full year £'000	Item No
<b>Proposals</b>						
Support for voluntary services	200	200	150	100	0	5
Reinvest in Youth Services	125	250	250	250	250	6
Develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy	75	0	0	0	0	12
Safeguard heritage buildings	75	0	0	0	0	10
		0	0	0	0	
Increase the Hardship Fund	250	200	200	200	200	1
Increase Council Officer capacity to deliver social housing	150	150	150	150	150	3
Reduce the increase in London Affordable Rent	35	35	35	35	35	2
Invest in transitional housing with Bromley Homeless	900	0	0	0	0	4
Install card payment parking meters at key locations	80	0	0	0	0	11
Additional Funding for Road Safety Projects	135					8
Extend anti-idling initiative	40	20	20	0	0	7
Set up Voluntary Fund for residents' donations	10	0	0	0	0	9
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>2075</b>	<b>855</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>635</b>	
<b>Funded by</b>						
Officers to identify savings of £785,000 from revenue funding relating to refurbishment of Churchill Court	-575	-210				
Officers to identify savings to meet future costs of support to voluntary sector		0	-150	-100	0	
Officers to identify alternative funding relating to youth services		-250	-250	-250	-250	
Funded from additional income from additional council tax on second homes (assuming implemented from 2025/26)		-398	-398	-398	-398	
One off contribution for Invest to Save earmarked reserve	-900	0	0	0	0	
Funded through s106 Local Employment and Town Centres not yet allocated	-80	0	0	0	0	
Utilisation of business rate levy adjustment (carried forward from 2023/24)	-411	0	0	0	0	
Contribution from Councils 2024/25 Central Contingency Sum	-109	3	-7	13	13	
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>-2075</b>	<b>-855</b>	<b>-805</b>	<b>-735</b>	<b>-635</b>	
<b>Net financial impact</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

This page is left intentionally blank

# Liberal Democrat Group Budget Amendments February 2024

The Liberal Democrat Group propose the following twelve amendments to the budget amendments:

## Protecting the most vulnerable

### **(1) Increase the Hardship Fund and extend eligibility (£250,000)**

Extend the Council Tax Support Scheme for the year 2024/25 to support those residents who are struggling through the cost-of-living emergency but fall just outside the current eligibility criteria and therefore do not currently qualify for council tax support.

### **(2) Reduce the increase in Bromley's London Affordable Rent and social housing rent (£35,000)**

The Council is proposing to increase the rent it charges residents in homes managed by Bromley Council by 7.7%. We propose to reduce this to 4% to make the increase more affordable for Bromley Council's most vulnerable tenants.

### **(3) Boost Council housing initiatives to provide better accommodation and reduce the need for temporary housing (£150,000)**

Increase Council Officer capacity to speed up current work on increasing the local social housing supply and investigate key approaches to find new accommodation sites and use of Council powers to bring long-term empty properties back into use.

With the cost of accommodation so significant and the need of Bromley residents so urgent the additional funding is needed to supercharge the Council's ambitions.

### **(4) Invest in transitional housing to support Bromley's homeless (£900,000)**

Work with 'Bromley Homeless' to deliver a transitional housing site to support rough sleepers make the transition into social housing. Often rough sleepers end up in expensive short-term accommodation without the support they need. Transitional housing will save money over time by reducing the use of expensive temporary housing. This is an invest to save initiative.

### **(5) Provide a grant for voluntary organisations paying rent to the Council to help with the rent increase (£200,000)**

The Council has already considered a payment management plan for Voluntary Sector Organisations facing a 30%+ increase in rent on Council-owned property. However, long-term payment plans may affect the viability of some voluntary organisations continuing. Offering a grant that voluntary organisations can use to pay unaffordable rent increases will protect such organisations and the valuable work they do in our community.

## Supporting community priorities

### **(6) Stop the planned cuts to youth service budget (£250,000)**

The Council are planning savings of £250,000 in the youth service budget over the next two years. Savings made in youth services must be re-invested to expand provision for young people. Additional budget is needed to help our young people thrive in our community, limit exposure to anti-social behaviour and crime, expand the provision of extra-curricular activities and increase school-based counselling.

**(7) Improve air quality by extending anti-idling Initiative (£80,000 over 3 years)**

Currently the Council's anti-idling enforcement is only conducted outside schools. Due to resource constraints other idling hotspots identified by residents are not enforced. A three-year project is proposed to expand the Council's anti-idling program to cover these hotspots and to deliver a community awareness program, air quality monitoring, more signage and additional enforcement.

**(8) Additional funding for minor road safety interventions (£135,000)**

Road safety issues are one of the most significant concerns of our residents. Whilst it is expected that major highway and road safety projects will take time, minor interventions such as signage, road markings and vehicle activated signs should be delivered quickly. Currently there is a lengthy waiting time for these simple interventions. The additional £150,000 will provide additional capacity to speed up responses.

**(9) Set up a Voluntary Fund for resident donations to support community organisations (£10,000)**

Provide Council Officer time to investigate options to establish an independent charitable fund to receive donations from Bromley residents. The fund would be used to support local voluntary and community groups or projects that make a difference to the lives of all residents in Bromley. Different models are used by other local authorities such as the London Borough of Richmond.

**(10) Safeguard the borough's heritage buildings (£75,000)**

Provide additional resources to undertake a project to assess, prioritise and safeguard heritage buildings in the borough, ensuring that our valuable buildings have the right protection or have a pathway to get the right protection. The additional budget will be used to boost the Council's heritage conservation capacity.

## **Accessible Council Services**

**(11) Install card payment parking meters at key locations (£80,000)**

The removal of all cash parking meters for on street parking and in Council owned car parks continues to be a source of widespread complaints across the borough, with some residents being unable or unwilling to use RingGo, or concerned about the RingGo charge that has increased parking charges. There have also been reports that parking in some locations has reduced, which in turn reduces footfall and accessibility to some of our town centres, shopping parades and public services. This funding would support the installation of parking meters that accept payment by card in key locations (as requested by residents). There is funding available in unallocated S106 Local economy and Town Centres that Council Officers confirm can be used for this purpose.

**(12) Develop a Digital Inclusion Strategy (£75,000)**

Funding for a 12-month project to develop and implement a Digital Inclusion Strategy that will help reduce the digital divide in Bromley. The strategy will identify where digital exclusion might be occurring and find ways to help. It will set out policies and practices that will ensure



that Council decision-making considers increasing digital inclusion through a range of high-quality online services and provides robust alternatives to those that cannot use online services.

## **Funding the amendments**

Detailed funding streams to support the above budget amendments are identified in appendix 1. The main funding sources are summarised below:

- £785,000 saving to be found in the Councils budget to refurbish the new Council Offices in the old Direct Line building.
- £411,000 windfall to the Council from the business rate levy adjustment.
- £80,000 from the £600K+ unallocated S106 contributions made by developers for Local Employment and Town Centre to be used to fund card payment parking meters in key locations. Noting the ongoing maintenance costs of the machines should be self-funding from parking revenue.
- £1,194,000 additional income from Council Tax on second homes between 2025-2028 to fund housing and rent initiatives.
- £900,000 from the Invest to Save earmarked reserve to provide the bulk of the funding to invest in Transitional Housing.
- Officers to identify alternative funding or savings to meet the cost of the support for voluntary groups and youth services in three years from 2025/26.
- £109,000 from the Central Contingency Sum for one year only and therefore not a recurring contribution.

This page is left intentionally blank