

BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING: 27th FEBRUARY 2025

ADDITIONS TO THE BUDGET FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING 2025/26.

(1) Proposed additions to the Revenue Budget 2025/2026

	2025/26 £'000
<p>1. Skip Days</p> <p>The continuing provision of the successful skip days that have taken place across the borough within 2024/2025. The costs include all associated costs including the hiring of skips and any additional staffing costs.</p> <p>Funding Proposal</p> <p>This addition will be funded from the Invest to Save reserve which currently has an unallocated balance of £105,000 and is forecast to increase by £96,000 from the 2024/2025 in year underspends. In funding this way this proposal will have no effect on the Corporate Savings target required in 2025/2026.</p>	£18,000****
<p>2. Market Hall Trader Support</p> <p>Trading conditions on the high streets are still extremely difficult and whilst some of the market traders on the square report an improvement due to the temporary location, others have signalled a decline in footfall levels due to the redevelopment works around the town square, the weather conditions, general downturn in the economy and sharp rise in the cost of living. The Portfolio Holder has received requests from market traders asking the Council to revisit rent and service charges or risk some traders simply leaving the cabins as they are unable to make a living.</p> <p>The Council has supported the market hall traders over the years, mostly through rent concessions. The current leases for traders in the cabins on the town square will expire at the end of March 2025 so it is critical that new leases are agreed and signed prior to the start of the new financial year. A report will be brought forward to the next Cabinet meeting to detail how support can be provided.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>This funding will be taken from the General Reserve balance of £2.5m as a one-off in 2025/2026. In funding this way this proposal will have no effect on the Corporate Savings target required in 2025/2026.</p>	£40,000**
<p>3. Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Sector Support.</p> <p>At the Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024, the Chancellor announced the extension of the business rates relief scheme for retail, hospitality and leisure properties, retaining the existing eligibility criteria but reducing the level of relief from 75% to 40%.</p> <p>Ideally the Council would like to continue support to these businesses but due to the cost of this relief being approximately £560,000 per annum, it would not be financially feasible for the council to undertake this. The government have announced its intention to introduce two lower multipliers for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) properties with rateable values (RVs) below £500,000. These will commence from April 2026 and will give long-term certainty and support to the high street, in contrast to the previous RHL relief which created a yearly cliff-edge. The government has set out its intention for these two new lower rates to be funded sustainably. To this end,</p>	£50,000**

<p>the government also intends to introduce a higher multiplier for all properties with RVs of £500,000 and above. This group represents less than one per cent of all properties, but captures the majority of large distribution warehouses, including those used by online giants.</p> <p>Due to the government changes from 2026/2027, the Council proposes setting aside £50,000 for one year only and will develop a scheme for how it can support businesses that may feel the effect of the reduction in relief from April 2025. A report will be brought forward to Cabinet specifying how the scheme will work and how and support can be provided.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>This funding will be taken from the General Reserve balance of £2.5m as a one-off in 2025/2026. In funding this way this proposal will have no effect on the Corporate Savings target required in 2025/2026.</p>	
<p>4. Provision of Additional Dog Waste Bins</p> <p>This will introduce an additional two dog waste bins in each ward (16x2). The costs include the provision of one extra dog bins across all wards of the borough and include the additional staffing and vehicle costs.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>This funding will be taken from the General Reserve balance of £2.5m as a one-off in 2025/2026 and would require to be a permanent addition to the revenue budget in future years. In funding this way this proposal will have no effect on the Corporate Savings target required in 2025/2026 although would increase future years by £50,000 plus inflation.</p>	<p>£57,000**</p>
<p>5. Community Township Funding</p> <p>Taking on board our public consultation and the need to provide support and activities across all wards within the borough, our administration would like to ensure all areas of Hyndburn benefits from the funds available. A report will be brought forward to a future Cabinet meeting specifying how the scheme will work and how and support can be provided.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>This funding will be taken from the General Reserve balance of £2.5m as a one-off in 2025/2026. In funding this way this proposal will have no effect on the Corporate Savings target required in 2025/2026.</p>	<p>£80,000**</p>
<p>Total cost of proposed additions</p>	<p>£245,000</p>

Note: Impact on Budget in year is NIL, although the above proposals will reduce the reserves forecast in the report by: Invest to Save (£18,000), General Fund Reserves (£227,000).

(2) Proposed additions to the Capital programme 2025/2026

	2025/26 £'000
<p>1. Increase of Funding for Oswaldtwistle Civic Theatre.</p> <p>Allocate a further £250,000 of reserves to the Civic Theatre. This funding would be in addition to the £267,000 budget within the current Capital Programme and would enable the Council to show its continuing commitment towards bringing this asset back into use. This building has a huge importance within the borough and this further addition would enable the Council to ensure the building is safe and secure with possible works including a new roof and the balance be available for future match funding, should the Council be able to secure and draw down any external funding in the future.</p> <p>This addition reflects our commitment as a group to show we have listened to the community and feedback from the Overview and Resources Scrutiny committee. It is felt that this provision would be sufficient to move forward with addressing the need for the theatre.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>Funded by a transfer from the General Reserve to the Capital Funding reserve in year. This will increase the Capital programme budget spend in year and will ensure funds are earmarked and available for future use.</p> <p>The Council has sufficient resources in reserve to maintain its recommended policy of maintaining a level above £1m in general reserves.</p>	£250,000**
<p>2. King George V Playing Fields</p> <p>The current capital programme has a remaining budget of £595,000 to enable drainage and pavilion works to take place at this site. The capital spend on this site is largely dependent on the sale of the Livingstone Road site with the works being funded using the capital receipt that would be generated by the sale. It is recognised that to facilitate any sale that and the attraction for new sports use of the playing fields, that the Council may firstly be required to undertake some works to make the pitches usable.</p> <p>This proposal plans to remove the current restriction on funding to enable works to be undertaken prior to any sale being finalised.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>This would be no additional cost to the Council although may require temporary use of earmarked reserves prior to the capital receipt being available.</p>	£000,000**
<p>3. Climate Change Reserve</p> <p>To continue the Councils commitment to addressing Climate Change within the borough the proposal is to increase this fund by a further £250,000 to continue decarbonisation works on Council buildings and assist in achieving the climate change targets. The Council is currently undertaking significant capital works across all its operational buildings and particularly in Accrington town centre. It is proposed that consideration could be given to enhancing the designs submitted under the current LUF schemes to incorporate more decarbonisation and potential use of photovoltaic panels on the roof of town centre sites.</p>	£250,000**

<p>Funding</p> <p>Funded by a transfer from the General Reserve to the Climate Change Reserve in year.</p> <p>The Council has sufficient resources in reserve to maintain its recommended policy of maintaining a level above £1m in general reserves.</p>	
<p>Total</p>	<p>£500,000</p>

Note: Impact on the Capital Programme in year is an increase of £250,000, although the above proposals will reduce the reserves forecast in the report by: General Fund Reserves (£500,000) and an increase in the Capital Funding Reserve of £250,000.

The above additions to the Revenue Budget and Capital programme are to be funded as follows

*All amendments would be an increase of Corporate Saving Target by 0%.

** This would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within General Fund reserve.

*** These would be funded by utilising the unallocated amount within the Balances Set Aside Future Programme reserve.

**** This would be funded by utilising the amount within Invest to Save reserve.

The Labour group feel that these schemes are deliverable and have highlighted suggested methods of funding.

The costings of these schemes have been confirmed with the Executive Director (Resources / S151 Officer).