

BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING: 27th FEBRUARY 2025

AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP TO THE 2025/26 BUDGET FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING.

(1) Proposed amendments to the Revenue budget

	2025/26 £'000
1. Transformation Manager The employment of a transformation manager, sat within the Chief Financial Officers portfolio. The role does not exist in Hyndburn, which would focus on Council efficiencies, finding savings that do not impact services, e.g. with new procurement procedures. As well, identify opportunities to improve services and achieve better outcomes, e.g. with digital implementations. The Council spends millions per year and a role which is solely dedicated to spending that well is a worthy investment. The role would better support the Council in meeting savings targets for the Medium Financial Strategy and enter any future Unitary Authority as a leader in efficiency (further bolstering the call for Hyndburn to be at its centre). Funded by: Invest to Save unallocated reserve currently sat at £105,000. Further years would be funded by the same Reserve pot, then the roles efficiency savings.	£70,000***
2. Regeneration Project Manager The employment of a regeneration project manager / officer. In recognition that Corporate Property and Regeneration officers are over capacity in dealing with numerous high value projects such as LUF and Leisure Transformation. In turn, allowing slippage of the capital programme into subsequent years, such as the Civic Theatre and King Georges Playing Fields (majority of funding went unspent and slipped from 2024-2025, to 2025-2026). The role would progress capital programmes awaiting delivery, as well as work in partnership with economic development / housing teams to identify opportunities for new regeneration (especially within our brownfield sites throughout our townships). The role will speed up the sale of our assets, increasing capital receipts, which are further delayed by capacity. There is nearly £3,000,000 worth of capital receipts expected – further capacity in these departments will yield monetary value beyond their cost. Initially funded by the General Reserve Fund for 2 years; at £70,000 per year. Further capital receipts and unlocking economic opportunity for the Borough will highly likely net more income for the Borough beyond the short term.	£70,000**
3. Anti-Social Behaviour fund to initially fund the appointment of Community Safety Officer (CSO). The government delayed the Long Term Plan for Towns Fund until 2026. Consultation and ideas had already been progressed and identified the need to invest in community safety to enhance the town centre regeneration plans. The recruitment of a CSO will allow the Council to start this vital work immediately, rather than wait for external funding yet to be confirmed. Funded from Balances set Aside to Fund Future programme reserve (specifically communities for heath funding) – currently stood at £55,000 for 2025-2026.	£46,000***
Total cost of proposed amendments	£186,000

Note: Impact on Budget in year is NIL, although the above proposals will reduce the reserves forecast in the report by: Invest to Save (£70,000), General Fund Reserves (£70,000) and Communities for Health Funding Reserve (£46,000).

(2)Proposed additions to the Capital programme

	2025/26 £'000
1. Additional allocation of reserves to Civic Theatre budget. Allocate a further £500,000 of reserves to the Civic Theatre. External funding, including through the Theatres at Risk register, often require significant match funding from the Council. The allocation of the funding from the General Reserve Fund will allow the Council to draw down upon the funding if required by any additional grant. Likewise, if the Regeneration Officer proposed as part of our amendments yields further capital receipts; the monies would be offset against the sale of our disposed assets. Reallocating monies from disposal to assets that the Borough and its residents want to see invested in. The current local government reorganisation being pursued by the Government will merge East Lancashire authorities. We want to see monies raised in Hyndburn, spent in Hyndburn before any merger takes place. Funded by the General Reserve Fund in year; potentially offset by capital receipts in year. At £500,000. The Council has sufficient resources in reserve to maintain the policy of being above £1,000,000; though, there is a possibility of reducing or eliminating that figure – something we should consider given the need to spend the monies in the Borough pre LGR.	£500,000**
2. Economic & Regeneration Reserve Fund There is an economic emergency as much as a climate emergency in Hyndburn; the latter of which received a £1,000,000 worth of reserves and has since delivered real, positive outcomes. A specific fund to be set up for a specific and intentioned spend led by officers (Economic Development Manager / Regeneration Officers) in consultation with external business and expert bodies, such as the Hyndburn Economic Policy Forum. This will allow the Borough to pursue ideas that boost our local economy, such as; - Invest in Hyndburn Brand (improved brand image, attracts higher quality businesses and brands to the region, improved relationship between business and HBC). - Grants for growth established businesses (Businesses need to demonstrate how 20% growth will be generated in application). - Start-up grant funding for town centre retail units (e.g Assets, ie capex, marketing, shop front). - Commission a Create Streets report; residents and businesses will benefit from seeing our Borough become more aesthetically designed and regenerated, such as practical recommendations from the 'Greening Up' report. Specific, Hyndburn led report commissioned by HBC.	£350,000**
Total	£850,000

Note: Impact on the Capital Programme in year is an increase of NIL, although the above proposals will change the reserves forecast in the report by: General Fund Reserves (£850,000) and an increase in Capital Funding Reserve £500,000 and the creation of a new Economic & Regeneration Reserve of £350,000.

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 Conservative 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.