

Unity Group Amendment to the Cabinet’s proposed 2023/24 Budget for Consideration at Full Council 16 February 2023

Purpose of Report

- To propose to Full Council one proposed amendment from the Unity Group to the budget recommended by Cabinet on 2nd February 2023, with officer’s technical comments on the impact to the budget.

Background

- The proposals are set out below:

Revenue Amendment: St Johns and Warndon Libraries

Unity Group Revenue Budget Amendment Proposals 2023/24	£m	£m
Expenditure – to invest in St Johns and Warndon libraries to ensure they remain open. The Unity Group is on the front foot in ensuring that the shortfall in income will be met and the residents of both areas can be served by excellent libraries that enable them to meet, further their education and seek out employment, not to mention warmth during the cost of living crisis created by the Government.		0.178
Funding – amendment to proposed Council Tax increase 2023/24. Increase by 4.99% instead of proposed 4.94%.	(0.152)	
Funding – use of reserves. Note this will be in place for up to three years by which time the Unity Group will have identified a long-term revenue solution and commit to keeping both libraries open and a key part of the communities, and improving the life of its residents.	(0.026)	
Net Total Impact 2023/24	(0.178)	0.178
Balance / Gap		0

- It has been calculated by Council Officers that a 4.99% increase in Council Tax will take the figure for 2023/24 Council Tax for a Band D property to £1,466.48 – an increase of £0.70 for the year compared to the Band D figure proposed in the draft budget.
- It has also been calculated by Council Officers that a 4.99% increase in Council Tax would generate an additional £0.152m in revenue, compared to the figure in the Draft Budget.

5. The Unity Group recognise that this will leave a very small shortfall and would seek to fund that from the Council's usable reserves, and it would do that for three years as it seeks to meet this very small gap.

Finance Technical Comments

6. The Government Settlement allows up to a 5% increase in Council Tax in 2022/23 and as such the setting of a 4.99% level is within that permitted level. The use of reserves could be funded from the Business Rates reserves due to the higher than forecast position arising in 2022/23.

Monitoring Officer Technical Comments

7. The proposal is to maintain a service and as such is legal.

Head of Paid Service Technical Comments

8. The proposal has no impact on the staffing of the organisation.

Conclusion

9. The Council is able to consider the amendment