

Licensing and Planning Policy Committee
23 January 2025

REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26

Head of Service:	Kevin Hanlon, Interim Chief Finance Officer
Report Author	Anna Clements, Sue Emmons
Wards affected:	(All Wards);
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Appendices (attached):	None

Summary

This report sets out budget estimates for income and expenditure for Licensing & Planning Policy services in 2025/26.

Recommendation (s)

The Committee is asked to:

- (1) Recommend the 2025/26 service estimates for approval at the budget meeting of Full Council in February 2025.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 The recommendations will enable the Council to meet its statutory duty to set a balanced budget for 2025/26.

2 Background

- 2.1 In February 2024, Full Council agreed the four-year Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28 (MTFS). The MTFS aims to maintain the financial health of the Council whilst delivering the priorities in the Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 The figures in this report reflect the provisional local government finance settlement for 2025/26.
- 2.3 The figures in this report reflect the work undertaken by budget managers and finance staff to identify any changes in resourcing requirements, and the provisional local government finance settlement for 2025/26.

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- 2.4 Service estimates for this Committee are included in the draft Budget Book 2025/26 that will be made available to all Councillors.
- 2.5 Estimates have been prepared on the basis that existing services to residents are maintained, unless specified otherwise in section 5.
- 2.6 To allow the Council to determine the budget and Council Tax in February, the Committee estimates have been presented as follows:-
- 2.6.1 The Budget Book contains the service estimates for 2025/26.
- 2.6.2 Unavoidable cost increases and income reductions are reflected in the estimates.
- 2.6.3 Recommended increases to fees and charges have been included within the Budget Book and the income estimates.
- 2.6.4 All increases in charges are subject to approval by the Committee/Council.

3 Forecast Outturn 2024/25

- 3.1 Before considering the revenue estimates for 2025/26, this section provides a summary of the forecast outturn for the current financial year.
- 3.2 The probable outturn specifically for Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, as advised at Audit & Scrutiny Committee in November 2024, shows no bet variance against budget as shown in the following table.

Licensing & Planning Policy Committee	Original Budget	Current Approved Budget	Forecast Outturn Q2	Forecast Variance
Service Group	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Planning Policy & Development Management	1,216	1,252	1,252	0
Licensing	21	34	34	0
Licensing & Planning Policy Committee	1,237	1,286	1,286	0

4 Proposals for 2025/26 Budget

- 4.1 The service estimates for 2025/26 are included in the draft Budget Book, circulated to councillors in January.

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4.2 A summary of the Committee's service estimates for 2025/26 is shown in the following table:

Licensing & Planning Policy Committee	Published Budget 2024/25	Base Position 2025/26
Service Group	£'000	£'000
Planning Policy & Development Management	1,216	1,268
Licensing	21	11
Licensing & Planning Policy Committee	1,237	1,279

4.3 The following table comprises a summary of the main changes to the Committee's proposed budget for 2025/26 compared with the published budget for 2024/25.

Licensing & Planning Policy Committee		Budget £'000
Published Budget 2024/25		1,237
Service Group	Change	
All	Variation in pay, pension (IAS19) & support service recharges	79
All	Sundry variances	(2)
Place Development	Increased Planning fees and charges in line with MTFS 6%	(8)
Licensing	Increased legal recharges to Licensing	20
Licensing	New Licensing software licence costs	20
Licensing	New Licensing staff	74
Licensing	Increased licensing income	(20)
Licensing	Increased Licensing fees and charges in line with MTFS 6%	(27)
Licensing	Additional Licensing income to fund additional expenditure	(94)
Base Position 2025/26		1,279

5 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

5.1 Equality Impact Assessment

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5.1.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

5.2 Crime & Disorder

5.2.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

5.3 Safeguarding

5.3.1 None arising from the contents of this report.

5.4 Dependencies

5.4.1 Other Policy Committees are also being presented with their budgets for approval in the January committee cycle.

5.5 Other

5.5.1 In preparing the revenue budget estimates officers have identified the following main risks facing the Committee in delivering services within the budget. These budgets will require careful management during the year.

Service	Risk	Budget Estimate 2025/26	Risk Management
Place Development	<p>Medium: The uncertainty of single, large applications can impact significantly on income. Applications, planning performance agreements and preapplications are dependent upon demand for development in the borough which is impacted by economic factors.</p>	<p>Total Budgeted Income £589k 10% change affects income by £60k; 25% change affects income by £147k</p>	<p>Monthly monitoring including analysing income against target continues. This includes regular budget monitoring reports in line with Financial Regulations.</p>

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	<p>Medium: Not reaching budgeted level of income from licensing.</p> <p>Loss of key licensees (i.e. taxi operators) to neighbouring boroughs.</p> <p>Risk of service users challenging level of fees charged.</p>	<p>Total budgeted income £662k; 10% change affects income by £66k.</p> <p>25% change affects income by £166k.</p>	<p>Regular budget monitoring reports in line with Financial Regulations.</p> <p>Engagement with key licensees.</p> <p>Ensure all support services are appropriately re-charged to demonstrate full cost recovery.</p>
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6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The draft Budget Book 2025/26 is highly detailed, therefore please can any questions or queries be sent to relevant officers in advance of the Committee meeting wherever possible.
- 6.2 **Section 151 Officer's comments:** Financial implications are contained within the body of this report.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The Council will fulfil its statutory obligations to produce a balanced budget and to comply with its policy on equalities.
- 7.2 Although there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, decisions taken about the budget will impact the services which can be delivered. In the event of any impact, there will need to be a equalities impact assessment in relevant cases.
- 7.3 **Legal Officer's comments:** None for the purposes of this report.

8 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 8.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged:
- Effective Council.
- 8.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 8.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** None arising directly from the contents of this report.
- 8.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** None arising directly from the contents of this report.

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- 8.5 **Partnerships:** Many services are provided by the Council without the direct involvement of other agencies. There is, however, an increasing role for partnership working with others to achieve mutually agreed objectives. The benefits and risks need to be assessed in each specific case to ensure that value for money is secured and the Council's priorities are delivered in the most efficient and effective manner.

9 Background papers

- 9.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- [2025/26 Strategic Financial Planning, Strategy & Resources Committee, 23 July 2024.](#)
- [2025/26 Budget Targets, Licensing & Planning Policy Committee, 17 October 2024.](#)

Other papers:

- Draft 2025/26 Budget Book.