

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE COUNCIL – BLENDED MEETING

Council Chamber, 6th Floor, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

22 February, 2024

**10.15 am - 11.45 am
and 12.15 pm - 2.40 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors David Ross (Convener), Tom Adams, David Alexander, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alistair Bain, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, James Calder, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Rod Cavanagh, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Graeme Downie, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Jean Hall-Muir, Judy Hamilton, Alycia Hayes, Cara Hilton, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Gary Holt, Andy Jackson, Margaret Kennedy, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, Jane Ann Liston, Mary Lockhart, Donald Lothian, David MacDiarmid, Julie MacDougall, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, Derek Noble, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Gordon Pryde, Bailey-Lee Robb, Alistair Suttie, Jonny Tepp, Ann Verner, Andrew Verrecchia, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker, Darren Watt, Daniel Wilson, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Blair Allan, John Caffrey and David Graham.

110. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 22.

111. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2024-2027 – REPORT BY THE EXECUTIVE, DIRECTOR FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES

In connection with the consideration of the General Fund Revenue Budget 2024-27, the council considered the following papers:-

- (a) report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advising of the terms of section 112 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 which restricted the voting rights of elected members who were in arrears in respect of the payment of community charge or council tax. The report also referred to the provisions of the Councillors' Code of Conduct which enabled members to participate, discuss and vote on matters relating to the setting of the council tax without the need to declare a financial interest, notwithstanding that members might have an interest in any item of expenditure;
- (b) Local Government Finance Circular No. 8/2023 providing details of the provisional total funding allocations for each council for the financial year 2024-25;

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- (c) report by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Services) which provided members with sufficient information to enable the council to approve a budget for 2024-27 as required by statute; and
- (d) Administration's Motion and Revenue Budget Proposals 2024-27.

Administration's Motion

Councillor David Ross, seconded by Councillor Altany Craik, moved as follows:-

"That the Council:-

1. Approves the report by the Executive Director (Finance & Corporate Services) and the resolution for the levying and collection of council tax and rates for the year 2024-25 as detailed below and specifically:-
 - (a) notes the details of the provisional settlement announced by the Scottish Government as outlined in Finance Circular 8/2023, and the terms of the settlement as outlined in the letter from Deputy First Minister, dated 19 December 2023;
 - (b) agrees a freeze of council tax for the financial year 2024-25 at Band D equivalent and the revenue budget which can be sustained by this level of income;
 - (c) notes the indicative levels of expenditure, subject to further detailed analysis in respect of the financial years 2025-26 and 2026-27;
 - (d) approves the prudential indicators;
 - (e) agrees an additional contribution of £17.1m to the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership;
 - (f) agrees that the Council set for 2024-25 the Council Tax at £1,385.18 for valuation Band D properties and proportionately for other Bands; and
 - (g) approves the terms of the Administration's Budget Statement and the attached investment proposals.
2. Agrees that early work commences in relation to the development of options for the preparation of the 2025-26 and 2026-27 revenue budgets.

RESOLUTION FOR THE LEVYING AND COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX AND RATES FOR THE YEAR 2024-25

Fife Council resolves for the financial year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March, 2025 as follows:-

- (i) in terms of Section 93 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf to set the amount of council tax to be paid in their area in respect of a chargeable dwelling listed in valuation Band D at £1,385.18 and to determine the amounts for all the valuation bands as follows:-

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Valuation Band	Council Tax
A	£923.45
B	£1,077.36
C	£1,231.27
D	£1,385.18
E	£1,819.97
F	£2,250.92
G	£2,712.64
H	£3,393.69

- (ii) in terms of sections 7 and 7B of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, to levy within their area the non-domestic rate as prescribed by the Scottish Ministers and in accordance with the relevant Non-Domestic Rates (Levying) (Scotland) Regulations."

SNP Amendment

Councillor David Alexander, seconded by Councillor Derek Glen, moved as follows:-

"That the Council:-

1. Approves the report by the Executive Director (Finance & Corporate Services) and the resolution for the levying and collection of council tax and rates for the year 2024-25 as detailed below and specifically:-
 - (a) notes the details of the provisional settlement announced by the Scottish Government as outlined in Finance Circular 8/2023, and the terms of the settlement as outlined in the letter from Deputy First Minister, dated 19 December 2023;
 - (b) agrees a freeze of council tax for the financial year 2024-25 at Band D equivalent and the revenue budget which can be sustained by this level of income;
 - (c) notes the indicative levels of expenditure, subject to further detailed analysis in respect of the financial years 2025-26 and 2026-27;
 - (d) approves the prudential indicators;
 - (e) agrees an additional contribution of £17.1m to the Fife Health and Social Care Partnership;
 - (f) agrees that the Council set for 2024-25 the Council Tax at £1,385.18 for valuation Band D properties and proportionately for other Bands; and
 - (g) approves the terms of the SNP Group's proposals outlined in Appendices 1 to 3 in the attached Statement.
2. Agrees that early work commences in relation to the development of options for the preparation of the 2025-26 and 2026-27 revenue budgets.

RESOLUTION FOR THE LEVYING AND COLLECTION OF COUNCIL TAX AND RATES FOR THE YEAR 2024-25

Fife Council resolves for the financial year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March, 2025 as follows:-

- (i) in terms of Section 93 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf to set the amount of council tax to be paid in their area in respect of a chargeable dwelling listed in valuation Band D at £1,385.18 and to determine the amounts for all the valuation bands as follows:-

Valuation Band	Council Tax
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G	£2,712.64
H	£3,393.69

- (ii) in terms of sections 7 and 7B of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1975, to levy within their area the non-domestic rate as prescribed by the Scottish Ministers and in accordance with the relevant Non-Domestic Rates (Levying (Scotland) Regulations".

Roll Call

For the Administration Motion - 39 votes

Councillors Tom Adams, Mary Bain-Lockhart, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Graeme Downie, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Margaret Kennedy, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Jane Ann Liston, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougal, Derek Noble, Gordon Pryde, David Ross, Jonny Tepp, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

For the SNP Amendment - 30 votes

David Alexander, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alie Bain, David Barratt, Auxí Barrera, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Rod Cavanagh, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Jean Hall Muir, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Andy Jackson, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Bailey-Lee Robb, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker and Daniel Wilson.

Decision

Accordingly, the Administration motion was carried.

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112. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2024-2025 (INCLUDING OPTIONS FOR THE HRA & GENERAL FUND HOUSING ACCOUNT (GFHA) RENTS AND CHARGES)

In connection with the consideration of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024-25, the council considered the following papers:-

- (a) joint report by the Head of Housing Services and Head of Finance which brought forward budget proposals for the Housing Revenue Account with a view to determining rent levels and other charges which would apply during 2024-25; and
- (b) Administration's Motion on the Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024-25.

Administration Motion

Councillor Judy Hamilton, seconded by Councillor Gordon Pryde, moved as follows:-

"That the Council: -

1. Approves the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024-25 report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Finance and agrees the following:
 - (a) Approves a rental increase of 5% for 2024-25 HRA rents and charges for 2024-25.
 - (b) Approves a rental increase of 5% on Homelessness Temporary Accommodation to keep rental increase on the General Fund Housing Account in line with increases on HRA rents and charges for 2024-25.
 - (c) Approves a reduction to the Tenant Support Funding of £0.200m to be replaced by funding from the Welfare Reserve fund proposed in the General Fund Revenue Budget, and the use of £0.222m from the HRA reserve to close the Budget Gap for 2024-25.
 - (d) Approves the terms of the Administration's HRA budget statement attached.

FIFE COUNCIL HRA REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25

	2024-25
	£m
Estimated Budget Gap in Year as per report by Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services	7.020
Increased income generated by 5% Rental Increase	(6.598)
Revised Budget Gap	0.422

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Proposed Reduction in Budget by Administration

Reduction in Tenant Support Funding	(0.200)
Reduction in HRA Balances	(0.222)
Revised Budget Gap	0.000

SNP Amendment

Councillor Brian Goodall, seconded by Councillor Lesley Backhouse, moved as follows:-

"That the Council: -

1. Approves the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2024-25 report by the Head of Housing Services and the Head of Finance and agrees the following:
 - (a) Approves a rental increase of 4% for 2024-25 HRA rents and charges for 2024-25.
 - (b) Approves a rental increase of 4% on Homelessness Temporary Accommodation to keep rental increase on the General Fund Housing Account in line with increases on HRA rents and charges for 2024-25.
 - (c) Approves a reduction in Tenant Support Funding of £1.500m to be replaced by decommitting balances in the general fund (previously set aside for Workforce Change costs), and the use of £0.242m from the HRA reserves to close the Budget Gap for 2024-25.
 - (d) Approves the terms of the SNP's HRA proposals attached in Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1

FIFE COUNCIL HRA REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25

	2024-25 £m
Budget Gap in Year as per report by Executive Director Finance & Corporate Services	7.020
Increased income generated by 4% Rental Increase	(5.278)
Revised Budget Gap	1.742
 Proposed Reduction in Budget by SNP	
Reduction in Tenant Support Funding	(1.500)
Reduction in HRA Balances	(0.242)
Revised Budget Gap	0.000

Note: £1.500m will be replaced for Tenant Support Funding from decommitted general fund balances."

Roll Call

For the Administration Motion - 38 votes

Councillors Tom Adams, Mary Bain-Lockhart, Aude Boubaker-Calder, Patrick Browne, James Calder, Alistair Cameron, Ian Cameron, Alex Campbell, Al Clark, Eugene Clarke, Fiona Corps, Altany Craik, Colin Davidson, Dave Dempsey, Sean Dillon, Graeme Downie, Gavin Ellis, Linda Erskine, Peter Gulline, Judy Hamilton, Cara Hilton, Gary Holt, Allan Knox, Robin Lawson, Jim Leishman, James Leslie, Kathleen Leslie, Jane Ann Liston, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougal, Derek Noble, Gordon Pryde, David Ross, Jonny Tepp, Andrew Verrecchia, Darren Watt, Jan Wincott and Conner Young.

For the SNP Amendment - 30 votes

David Alexander, Naz Anis-Miah, Lesley Backhouse, Alie Bain, David Barratt, Auxi Barrera, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Rod Cavanagh, Julie Ford, Derek Glen, Brian Goodall, Jean Hall Muir, Alycia Hayes, Stefan Hoggan-Radu, Andy Jackson, Rosemary Liewald, Carol Lindsay, David MacDiarmid, Lea McLelland, Lynn Mowatt, Sarah Neal, John O'Brien, Nicola Patrick, Bailey-Lee Robb, Alistair Suttie, Ann Verner, Ross Vettraino, Craig Walker and Daniel Wilson.

Decision

Accordingly, the Administration motion was carried.