



**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING of the CLACKMANNANSHIRE COUNCIL held in the
Council Chamber, Kilncraigs, Alloa, on Thursday 27 February 2025 at 9.30 am.**

PRESENT

Councillor Phil Fairlie, Convener (Chair)
Councillor Donald Balsillie
Councillor Denis Coyne
Councillor Kenneth Earle
Councillor Ellen Forson
Councillor Wendy Hamilton
Councillor Scott Harrison
Councillor Craig Holden
Councillor William Keogh (Via Teams)
Councillor Fiona Law
Councillor Darren Lee
Councillor Graham Lindsay
Councillor Kathleen Martin
Councillor Mark McLuckie
Councillor Jane McTaggart
Councillor Bryan Quinn
Councillor Janine Rennie

IN ATTENDANCE

Nikki Bridle, Chief Executive
Chris Alliston, Strategic Director (Partnership & Performance)
Lorraine Sanda, Strategic Director (People)
Kevin Wells, Strategic Director (Place)
Lindsay Sim, Chief Finance Officer (Partnership & Performance)
Colin Bruce, Chief Education Officer (People)
Sharon Robertson, Chief Social Work Officer (People) (Via Teams)
Lee Robertson, Senior Manager, Legal and Governance (Partnership & Performance) (Clerk to the Council)
Adrienne Aitken, Improving Outcomes Team Leader (People)
Michael Boyle, Improving Outcomes Business Manager (People) (Via Teams)
Rona Burns, Solicitor, Legal and Governance (Partnership & Performance) (Via Teams)
Veronica Cully, Senior Manager, Inclusion and Partnership (People) (Via Teams)
Wendy Forrest, Head of Strategic Planning & Health Improvement (HSCP) (Via Teams)
Sarah Goldberg, Team Leader, Legal and Governance (Partnership & Performance)
Alastair Hair, Team Leader/Senior Manager (Partnership & Performance)
Ian Howse, Deloitte – External Audit (Via Teams)
Elizabeth Hutcheon, Management Accountancy Team Leader (Partnership & Performance)
Nicola Mack, Chief Accountant (Partnership & Performance)
Carla MacFarlane, Communications Officer (Partnership & Performance)
Joanna McDonald, Interim Chief Officer for Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP)
Scott McDonald, Senior Manager, Justice Services (Via Teams)
Wendy Robertson, Senior Manager Transformation (via Teams)
Gillian Scott, Senior Manager, Early Intervention (People)
Murray Sharp, Senior Manager, Housing (Place) (Via Teams and in Chambers)
Robbie Stewart, Senior Manager, Sport and Leisure (People) (Via Teams)
Donna Tierney, Accountant (Partnership & Performance) (Via Teams)
Melanie Moore, Committee Services (Partnership & Performance)
Gillian White, Committee Services (Partnership & Performance) (Minute)

CC(25)015 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Martha Benny.

CC(25)016 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CC(25)017 BUDGET CONTEXT AND OUTLOOK

The report, submitted by the Section 95 Officer, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, aimed to provide information on the Budget context and outlook for the Council as it prepared to agree its General Services Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2025/26. The report had been prepared in support of the Council's proposed General Service Revenue and Capital Budget 2025/26 and aimed to allow elected members to consider broad issues of financial resilience and sustainability ahead of taking its decisions.

Councillor William Keogh joined the meeting via Teams during questions on this item of business (9.46 am)

Motion

To agree the recommendations as set out in the report.

Moved by Councillor Ellen Forson. Seconded by Councillor Graham Lindsay.

Voting

Following debate on the motion, in terms of Standing Order 14.7, Councillor Earle asked for a roll call vote. The Council agreed that a vote be taken by calling the roll and at this stage there were 17 members present who were eligible to vote. On the roll being called, the members present voted as follows:

For the Motion (11)

Councillor Phil Fairlie
Councillor Donald Balsillie
Councillor Darren Lee
Councillor Graham Lindsay
Councillor Fiona Law
Councillor Wendy Hamilton
Councillor Jane McTaggart
Councillor Ellen Forson
Councillor Bryan Quinn
Councillor Scott Harrison
Councillor Denis Coyne

Against the Motion (0)

Abstain from Voting (6)

Councillor Mark McLuckie
Councillor William Keogh
Councillor Janine Rennie
Councillor Kenneth Earle
Councillor Craig Holden
Councillor Kathleen Martin

On a division of 11 votes to 0 with 6 abstentions, the Motion was carried.

Decision

On a division of 11 votes to 0 with 6 abstentions, the Council:

Noted the:

1. Background and context to the Council's socio-economic and systemic funding challenges, exacerbated by a largely population-based mechanism for distributing the Scottish Government Grant Income received (section 3);
2. Council's track record of delivering budget savings; collaboration, leveraging external resource and innovative transformation (section 4);
3. Financial outlook ahead of setting the Council's Budget and the need to maximise the value of permanent reductions in expenditure and increases in income wherever possible to deliver medium to longer term financial sustainability (paragraph 4.14 and section 4); and
4. Financial outlook, residual risks and uncertainties should the 2025/26 General Services Revenue and Capital Budgets, proposed later in this Council agenda, be approved (paragraph 4.17 and section 4).

Agreed to:

5. Prioritise, support and invest in the key activities being taken forward to mitigate the pressures (section 5) and to deliver service and financial sustainability;
6. Consolidate and implement its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and a Financial resilience Framework which will be regularly monitored and reported to Council through the regular Budget Strategy Update reports (paragraphs 5.30-5.33); and
7. Identify any further potential options it would like developed to mitigate current and future service and financial sustainability challenges in addition to the current activities summarised in section 5 of this report (paragraph 5.1).

Action

Section 95 Officer, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer

CC(25)018 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2025/26

The report, submitted by the Chief Finance Officer, presented the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2025/26 and Prudential Indicators for 2025/26 to 2027/28.

Motion

To agree the recommendations in the report.

Moved by Councillor Ellen Forson. Seconded by Council Graeme Lindsay.

Decision

The Council:

1. Noted the information contained in the report;
2. Approved the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2025/26 and Prudential Indicators for the years 2025/26 to 2027/28 (as attached at Appendix A, in compliance with the Prudential Code requirements;
3. Noted the continuation of the Borrowing Strategy to support continued capital investment (paragraph 5.6); and

4. Noted the investment portfolio position as at 31st January 2025 (Appendix B).

Action

Chief Finance Officer

In line with Standing Order 10.23, the Convener adjourned the meeting at 10.45 am for a comfort break. When the meeting resumed at 11.05 am, 17 members remained present.

CC(25)019 GENERAL SERVICES REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET

The report, submitted by the Chief Finance Officer, present the General Services Budget for 2025/26. The report built on the regular update reports and briefings presented to Council and the Audit and Scrutiny Committee throughout the year, including those covering the Be the Future Transformation Programme and implementation of the Target Operating Model (TOM). The paper was considered in conjunction with “Item 3 Budget Context and Outlook” report which appeared separately on the agenda.

Motion

To agree the recommendations set out in the report.

Moved by Councillor Ellen Forson. Seconded by Councillor Graham Lindsay.

The Convener advised that there were two amendments which had been circulated previously to members. The Convener also advised that he had received an item of urgent business from Councillor Craig Holden relating to a letter which was received in connection with the removal of Non Domestic Rates discretionary relief for charities and sports clubs. The Convener accepted this item of urgent business and suggested that the item may result in a third amendment being put forward.

Amendment 1

“That Council agrees to remove the savings for year 2026/2027 in respect of the cessation of Library and CAP from Alva and Tullibody to allow for a review on options of an alternative model of delivery of these services (including delivery of these services by a community group). A report will be brought back to Council prior to the budget setting in 2026/2027.

The implication of this amendment is that by removing the saving of £96,345, this will increase the budget gap for 2026/27 by the same value. Any saving as a result of the review will likely not be able to be implemented in full until 2027/28. Alternative savings or permanent increases in income would need to be found in 2026/27 to offset this reduction as part of 2026/27 budget setting.”

Moved by Councillor Bryan Quinn. Seconded by Councillor Donald Balsillie.

Voting on Amendment 1

For the amendment	17 votes
Against the amendment	0 votes
Abstain from voting	0

The amendment was carried by unanimously.

Amendment 2

“The amendment to the General Services Revenue and Capital Budget 2025/26 budget is as follows:

1. The proposed council tax rate to be reduced to 8% from a proposed 13%, and
2. Removal of the savings proposal for Cessation of Library and CAP from Alva and Tullibody.

The total cost of this amendment is £1,373,345. Council should note that this proposal will not only have an effect on this General Services Revenue and Capital Budget for 2025/26 in terms of reducing income and reducing balances of the various funds and/or reserves as noted below but also the indicative budget for 2026/27 as follows:

- Reduction in income through loss of Council Tax income £1.277m
- Reduction in income through loss of Council Tax income from reduced base £0.128m
- Increase in expenditure through removal of saving – Cessation of Library and CAP from Alva and Tullibody £0.096m

The budget gap for 2026/27 after this proposed amendment would increase from £7.340m by £1.499m to £8.839m.

The reduction in Council tax income would also increase the budget gap in 2027/28 and beyond as the assumed 10% increase will be lower as it is calculated on a lower base. As the reduction in Council Tax lowers the base income budget this adds to the gap in each future years, increasing the gap to £21.002m by 2029/30.

The cost for the above proposals in 2025/26 will be met by a reduction of transfers to reserves as follows:

1. The additional proposed £2m to the transformation fund reduced by £460,337 to £1,539,663.

The transformation fund as at December 2024 has a balance of £1,713,000 however £1,441,000 is committed to projects within current and future years, leaving an uncommitted balance of £272,000 before this additional transfer.

2. The additional proposed £1m to the employment fund reduced by £230,169 to £769,831.

It is noted that the Council spent £324,000 of this fund in 2023/24 and the fund has a current balance of £515,000.

3. The proposed transfer of £2.958m to a service pressure reserve reduced by £682,839 to £2,277,161.

We recognise this reserve has been established to cover a number of assumed pressures and this will reduce the amount available to meet any of these uncertain pressures during 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The reduction of these reserves may impact on the ability of the work being undertaken in Transformation, Collaboration and Partnership working, Be the Future and other associated projects/work being undertaken by the Council to support financial sustainability.

At a time of significant pressure for people within Clackmannanshire this would ease potential financial impact while still enabling reserves to be held at a minimum level.”

Moved by Councillor Janine Rennie. Seconded by Councillor Mark McLuckie.

Councillor Quinn asked for a brief adjournment to consider the amendment. The Convener agreed to adjourn the meeting at 12.24 pm. When the meeting resumed at 12.45 pm, 17 members remained present.

Voting on Amendment 2

Following debate on the amendment, in terms of Standing Order 14.7, Councillor Earle asked for a roll call vote. The Council agreed that a vote be taken by calling the roll and at this stage there were 17 members present who were eligible to vote. On the roll being called, the members present voted as follows:

For Amendment 2 (6)

Councillor Mark McLuckie
Councillor William Keogh
Councillor Janine Rennie
Councillor Kenneth Earle
Councillor Craig Holden
Councillor Kathleen Martin

Against Amendment 2 (11)

Councillor Phil Fairlie
Councillor Donald Balsillie
Councillor Darren Lee
Councillor Graham Lindsay
Councillor Fiona Law
Councillor Wendy Hamilton
Councillor Jane McTaggart
Councillor Ellen Forson
Councillor Bryan Quinn
Councillor Scott Harrison
Councillor Denis Coyne

Abstain from Voting (0)

On a division of 11 votes to 6 with 0 abstentions, Amendment 2 was defeated.

Amendment 3

“Council agrees to remove the savings for year 2026/2027 in respect of the removal of Non Domestic Rates discretionary relief for charities and sports clubs to allow for a period of consultation to take place with those affected leading to a review and subsequent report which can be considered by council prior to the budget setting in 2026/2027.

The implication of this amendment is that by removing the saving of £4,000 this will increase the budget gap for 2026/27 by the same value. Any saving as a result of the review will likely not be able to be implemented in full until 2027/28. Alternative savings or permanent increases in income would need to be found in 2026/27 to offset this reduction as part of 2026/27 budget setting.”

Moved by Councillor Craig Holden. Seconded by Councillor Janine Rennie.

Councillor Forson asked for a brief adjournment to consider the amendment. The Convener agreed to adjourn the meeting at 12.50 pm. When the meeting resumed at 1.00 pm, 17 members remained present.

Voting on Amendment 3

For the amendment	17 votes
Against the amendment	0 votes
Abstain from voting	0

The amendment was carried by unanimously.

Voting on the Original Motion as Amended by Amendments 1 and 3

Following debate on the original motion as amended, in terms of Standing Order 14.7, Councillor Earle asked for a roll call vote. The Council agreed that a vote be taken by calling the roll and at this stage there were 17 members present who were eligible to vote. On the roll being called, the members present voted as follows:

For the motion as amended (11)

Councillor Phil Fairlie
Councillor Donald Balsillie
Councillor Darren Lee
Councillor Graham Lindsay
Councillor Fiona Law
Councillor Wendy Hamilton
Councillor Jane McTaggart
Councillor Ellen Forson
Councillor Bryan Quinn
Councillor Scott Harrison
Councillor Denis Coyne

Against the motion as amended (6)

Councillor Mark McLuckie
Councillor William Keogh
Councillor Janine Rennie
Councillor Kenneth Earle
Councillor Craig Holden
Councillor Kathleen Martin

Abstain from Voting (0)

On a division of 11 votes to 6 with 0 abstentions, the motion as amended was carried.

Decision

The Council agreed:

1. The General Services Revenue and Capital Budget for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A, including:
 - 1.1 The proposals for demand pressures including the uplift of 3% for Clothing Grants (Appendix B) (paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3);
 - 1.2 Policy and Redesign savings set out in Appendix D and note the Management Efficiency savings set out in Appendix C (paragraph 6.5); subject to:
 - the removal of the savings for year 2026/2027 in respect of the cessation of Library and CAP from Alva and Tullibody (£96,345) to allow for a review on options of an alternative model of delivery of these services (including delivery of these services by a community group) as set out in Amendment 1. A report will be brought back to Council prior to the budget setting in 2026/2027.
 - the removal of savings for year 2026/2027 in respect of the removal of Non Domestic Rates discretionary relief for charities and sports clubs (£4,000) to allow for a period of consultation to take place with those affected leading to a review and subsequent report which can be considered by council prior to the budget setting in 2026/2027 as set out in Amendment 3.
 - 1.3 The 2025/26 Income and Charging Strategy (Appendix E);
 - 1.4 The utilisation of £1.400m Capital receipts to offset loans fund principal repayments (paragraph 6.10);

- 1.5 The utilisation of £0.346m from uncommitted reserves to support the 2025/26 revenue budget (paragraph 6.10);
- 1.6 A net resource transfer of £30.047m for the Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership for 2025/26 (paragraph 7.3);
- 1.7 The revised General Services Capital Programme incorporating project resource in Appendix A and section 8;
- 1.8 A 13% increase in the level of Council Tax for 2025/26 resulting in a Band D Council tax of £1,594.38 (paragraph 5.5);
- 1.9 An allocation of £2.000m to the Transformation Fund funded from the Service Concession Reserve (paragraph 6.15);
- 1.10 An allocation of £1.000m to the Employment Fund funded from the Service Concession Reserve (paragraph 6.15);
- 1.11 Establish a new Service Pressures Reserve to meet service pressures including HSCP and NI, utilising £2.958m from the Service Concession Reserve (paragraph 6.16);
- 1.12 The revised policy for Non Domestic Rate (NDR) - Empty Property Reliefs from 1 April 2025 (paragraph 3.4), and
- 1.13 The Be the Future Target Operating Model: Corporate Priorities 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A.

The council agreed to note:

- 1.14 The challenging context within which this Budget is presented (Appendix A and item 3 which appears separately on this Council Agenda);
- 1.15 The forecasted overspend of £0.054m by 31 March 2025, following the continuation of spending constraints (paragraph 3.1);
- 1.16 The summary of recent budget engagement activity detailed in section 4;
- 1.17 That the minimum reserve policy of 2% remains unchanged with the balance of £3.420m in uncommitted General Services Revenue reserves, after setting the budget, equating to 2% (paragraphs 6.8-6.9);
- 1.18 The five year cumulative indicative gap of £19.132m up to 2029/30 and a funding gap of £7.340m in 2026/27 following setting this budget (Exhibit 4), and
- 1.19 The engagement with UK and Scottish Governments on the 2025/26 budget (paragraphs 5.2 and 5.6 and Appendix H).
- 1.20 The implication of Amendment 1 is that by removing the saving of £96,345, this will increase the budget gap for 2026/27 by the same value. Any saving as a result of the review will likely not be able to be implemented in full until 2027/28. Alternative savings or permanent increases in income would need to be found in 2026/27 to offset this reduction as part of 2026/27 budget setting.
- 1.21 The implication of Amendment 2 is that by removing the saving of £4,000 this will increase the budget gap for 2026/27 by the same value. Any saving as a result of the review will likely not be able to be implemented in full until 2027/28. Alternative savings or permanent increases in income would need to be found in 2026/27 to offset this reduction as part of 2026/27 budget setting.

Action

Chief Finance Officer

Ends: 1.30 pm

