

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

2.1.1 Agree the residents of Moray are finding things tough due to the Cost of Living crisis therefore it is incumbent upon all Moray Councillors to reflect the impact the Cost of Living crisis is having on Moray residents in the proposed budgets.

2.1.2 Notes the attached COSLA budget reality Local Government Settlement 23/24 which shows the pressures Local government are under when it comes to funding.

2.1.3 Agree Council must reflect upon the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 which requires the Council in exercising functions, to act in the best way calculated to contribute to the delivery of emission reduction targets. As such instructs the appropriate committee to consider instructing the Chief Executive to report annually from the budget 24/25 the proposed maximum carbon emissions that can be emitted during the year from energy and water use, Council buildings, Council fleet, street lighting, internal waste and staff travel.

2.1.4 Notes the UK Governments Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts for Inflation January 2023, and the Bank of England's predictions for inflation February 23 which shows inflation is expected to begin to fall from the middle of this year and be around 4% by the end of the year.

2.1.5 Agree additional items at £470,000 as per those proposed in the SNP budget amendment.

2.1.5b Agrees additional items from Labour Group amendment to be funded from Covid reserves with the exception of Item 5 which will be dealt with under 2.1.7b and 2.1.7c.

2.1.6 Note that within the budget papers presented by officers there is an amount of £1,613,000 allocated for Transformation. Notes that although cash has been allocated against this item, there are no details given as to transformational projects .

2.1.6b Agrees to increase the amount to £2,113,000 to incorporate Labour proposal for the Establishment of an Education Investment Fund to support added pressures on schools post covid and the objective of raising attainment.

2.1.6c Agreed the Education Investment Fund to be targeted towards areas identified by officers as most in need, as opposed to spread across council area and agrees to report on most effective use of the half a million pound fund to be brought to council as per the below.

2.1.6d Instructs officers to produce a report to come within 3 cycles providing details of proposed transformational projects for which this money has been allocated.

2.1.7 Agrees to no compulsory redundancies over the next six month period to allow consideration of Scottish Government's final settlement with local councils including apropos current pay disputes.

## **Savings**

2.1.8 Agree ECLES Committee to bring a report on 50% reduction of DSM for next potential ECLS Committee and then to bring Committee recommendation forward to Full Council.

2.1.9 Agree six month freeze on Transformation Manager Head of Service post which remains vacant at this time.

## **CAPITAL**

2.1.10 Instruct officers to scope out before end December 2023 the cost and feasibility of Moray Council building a new Low Carbon / Digital Buckie High School & Community Hub with or without money from the Scottish Government / LEIP funding.

2.1.11 Agrees to insert £88m into the Capital Plan starting in 2024/25 for the building of a state-of-the-art new school for Buckie High School to include community facilities.

2.2 It is recommended that the Council approves :

- (i) An increase of 5% on Council Tax for 2023/24;
- (ii) Provision of £8,598,000 for budget pressures as listed in APPENDIX 2;
- (iii) Service developments totalling £704,000 as described in paragraph 4.14;
- (iv) Savings totalling £1,677,000 as listed in APPENDIX 3;
- (v) Budgeted expenditure of £260,130,000 for 2023/24;
- (vi) Indicative budgets for 2024/25 and 2025/26 as set out in APPENDIX 1;
- (vii) Capital expenditure of £59,186,000 for 2023/2024 as set out in the indicative ten-year Capital Plan in APPENDIX 4;
- (viii) Funding for Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) to increase by Moray's share of the £100 million still undistributed in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23, less £412,000 per the settlement letter from Scottish Government.

(ix) Use of ear-marked of £759,000 for Moray Growth Deal cash flow and of £14,768,000 from covid, reserves to balance the budget; and

(x) An increase of up to 27% in temporary accommodation charges to mitigate the budgetary impact as detailed in paragraph 5.7 as there has not been an uprating since 2015.

(xi) Instruct Officers to bring forward identified savings to a meeting not later than December 2023 meeting of Council as to how the projected savings of £18,741,000 in 2024/25 and £756,000 in 2025/26 can be met;

2.2 It is recommended that the Council notes:

(i) There will be conditions placed on the Council in terms of the settlement letter from the Depute First Minister and that these are still the subject of on-going communications;

and

(ii) A review of services is underway and will be the basis for community engagement on proposals to bring the Council's budget back into balance for 2024/25;