

Bury Conservative Budget Amendment

2021/22

*Back Bury, Prestwich, Radcliffe, Ramsbottom,
Tottington and Whitefield*

*Investing in our Towns and Communities,
protecting our precious green spaces*



Bury Conservatives

Bury Conservatives Alternative Budget 2021/22

Bury Conservative Councillors are the main opposition on Bury Council. In our role of opposition, we hold the Labour administration to account, but we must aspire to do better as a borough. We want Bury to transform as a Council but we a wonderful place to live, work and socialise. The Conservative Alternative Budget is our plan for the Ramsbottom, Tottington, Bury, Radcliffe, Whitefield and Prestwich. There is an alternative to the current administration, the Conservative Group have fresh ideas which will benefit all residents across the Borough not just areas which appear to be voting a certain colour.

Bury Conservative Council Group have welcomed the Government's confirmation that Bury MBC will receive a budget increase in real terms. The Conservative Group note that the Labour Council did not formally oppose the Local Government Settlement put forward for 2021 and that there was no need for a vote in Westminster due to there being no opposition to this. The Conservative Government, with support of our towns two Members of Parliament, are committed to levelling up to improve services across the Country.

For the last decade which the Labour Party have controlled Bury they have blamed the Central Government for every reverse and decline but not themselves. They have presented budgets which have passed each year through the use of reserves as Council departments overspend.

Bury is one of the worst performing authorities in the country for electric car charging points. There are enormous government subsidies to encourage Local Authorities to install charging points to provide the infrastructure to encourage residents to switch to electric. The Conservative Group presented a motion in 2018 which passed unanimously led by Cllr. Nick Jones and seconded by Cllr. Oliver Kersh. Despite all of this very little has happened but empty words about Climate Change from the administration.

Over the last decade schools in Bury have gone from being some of the best in the country and Bury advising others to an authority which received reports from OFSTED on how to improve. In this time there has been three Directors of Children Services,

The Labour Party reduced bin collections, punishing hardworking families. In this time fly-tipping and parts of the borough have been known 'hot spots' for waste. Instead of trying to fix the problem the authority has put some funds into enforcement without fully understanding what is causing the issue. Bury has one of the highest bulky waste removal fees in Greater Manchester which consists of a complicated algorithm to have items removed.

Bury Council have refused to think innovatively but more think of themselves. Allowances have continued to increase as well as the number of special additional responsibility payments to Councillors. In the last year alone the new administration, 4th since they took control in May 2011, increased the number of the Cabinet from 7 to 9 and well as increasing the Deputy Cabinet Members to 10. This all-costs money, taxpayer's money.

Throughout this time whilst there has been waste at the Town Hall through excessive recruitment drives with more and more people earning over £100,000, hundreds of thousands spent on outside consultancy. Moreover, the Council has become a part time property investor, buying a restaurant in Lytham St. Anne's which has not had a tenant for three years, purchasing a Turkish Restaurant in Prestwich with the view to demolishing it, a car park in Huddersfield... the list goes on, but one thing remains, all of this expenditure is taxpayer's money. Are we being well served?

There must be an alternative to the above. There should be accountability and responsibility. For far too long there has been waste at the Town Hall and the priorities of residents have not been listed to. With Bury Council receiving more funding in real terms than it did last year as well as over £100 million in Government grants, there is simply no excuse for Bury not to deliver on the priorities of its residents.

This budget amendment puts forward an alternative, an alternative which invests in our towns, protects our beautiful greenbelt for future generations and provides a first-class education system. That alternative is a Conservative-led Council delivering on the priorities of residents ending a culture of waste at the Town Hall.

A Clear Alternative

The Conservative Budget is one which invests resident's money wisely, protects and improves frontline services. Communities over consultants.

Now, more than ever, there needs to be a Council that can innovate and transform services for the benefit of residents. The Conservative alternative Budget identifies areas for improvement for the benefit of residents. This budget amendment embraces the Bury 2030 'Let's do It.' Strategy to improve the services the Council delivers. Bury will become a digital Council, one which leads both here in Greater Manchester and across the Country.

Spend will be heavily reduced in back office expense allowances and small departmental budgets. Bury will be a Council which promotes healthy living, supports children cycling, improves our schools to provide a first-class education. Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics will be embraced whilst children from disadvantaged backgrounds will have all the support needed to ensure they achieve better outcomes. Coding will be taught in **every** school.

Via the Schools rebuilding programme the Council needs to invest in schools to ensure we have the capacity and the modern facilities required.

Hundreds of electric car charging facilities will be installed across Ramsbottom, Tottington, Bury, Radcliffe, Whitefield and Prestwich. This will be both in fixed bays and electric charging via streetlights. The Council will provide the infrastructure to encourage and support our residents make the switch to electric cars and carbon benches will be installed in Prestwich.

Making the air we breathe cleaner by installing a range of electric charging points will enable Bury to become a beacon green Council, a Leader in Greater Manchester and one which shows the Country #CouncilsCan. We must protect our environment and to help improve air quality an engine idling fine will be introduced.

Finances will be balanced with Council departments taking full ownership from the top down. There will no longer be a culture of overspends and underinvestment. Bury Council will become a Great Place to Work. One which supports Officers and provides world class services to its residents.

The Conservative alternative is one which makes Bury a Great place to live, work and visit. Council services will be improved putting residents' priorities of the administration. Investing in our towns and communities instead of hundreds of thousands on consultant fees.

Investing in Shared Services and Cutting Waste at the Town Hall

We recognise the importance of Shared Services and how they can generate savings to both Bury Council and the authorities we share services with.

One of the most successful Shared Services arrangements in the country is that of Westminster City Council with Kensington & Chelsea. This arrangement has reduced the cost of the Council by £50m. The London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond have a sharing arrangement, and combining services, for an annual saving of £10 million.

Bury Conservatives propose a shared services arrangement with both our Legal Services and a back office arrangement with another Council. This will enable the Council to focus and implement the Bury 2030 Let's do it vision and invest to make Bury a beacon Council for digital.

Through embracing Shared Services Bury Council will be able to invest in our Towns, provide a First-Class education offer and protect our beautiful greenspaces for our residents and communities to enjoy.

Explanatory Notes

Making Bury a Safer Borough

Hi-Tech CCTV - £14,000

The Conservative Group believe the Council needs to do more to tackle crime across the borough. To keep our street safe 5 Hi-Tech CCTV cameras will be installed in crime Hotpots across the Borough.

To honour the budget proposal from 2020/21 residents will be encouraged to become a Special Constable and this is supported via the Council Tax reduction scheme.

Reversing the proposal to dim streetlights

The Cabinet Budget Report has the proposal to dim the streetlights across the Borough after midnight to save £20,000. The Conservative Group believe streetlights should not be dimmed at night because street lighting helps accident prevention as well as reduces crime levels in areas.

A detailed saving proposal is detailed in this amendment to keep the streetlights on. the Conservative Group propose cutting the excessive Labour Councillor allowances. In May, the Conservative Group tabled an amendment to stop an increase in Labour allowances which currently cost the taxpayers of Bury thousands¹.

Street lighting is vitally important and helps residents feel safe at night. I firmly believe that dimming streetlights will make residents feel unsafe and could potentially encourage anti-social behaviour.

Making Bury a Cleaner Borough to Live, Work and Socialise

A Local Plan for Bury

The Conservative Group note the Councils desire to push ahead with 'Places for Everyone' formally the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. One of the issues has been that Bury does not have a Local Plan. This budget amendment ringfences £100,000 to ensure Bury Council can create and implement a Local Plan².

The Local Plan will be for the future development of the Borough, drawn up by the Council in consultation with the community and third-party organisations. This will ensure we have a plan for Bury drawn up by our community not one decided by Officials outside of the Town.

The Conservative Group is dedicated to protecting the borough precious greenbelt.

Queen's Canopy

All across the United Kingdom, people will be encouraged to "Plant a Tree for the Jubilee" through The Queen's Green Canopy initiative³. Bury is no different and the Council will support schools, colleges, charities and community organisations in celebrating the Platinum Jubilee. It is hoped, homeowners and businesses will also take part in the initiative to celebrate Her Majesty's 70th year.

Her Majesty has planted over 1,500 trees across the world throughout her 70 year reign. There is no better way to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in Bury than planting trees.

The last year has been challenging for everyone and we have benefited from our enjoying our beautiful outdoor space. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of our greenspaces and the importance that we must protect it. Bury Council will take part in the Queen's Green Canopy which will encourage our residents, businesses and communities to come together, celebrate and improve our environment.

The Queen's Green Canopy will be officially launched in May 2021, Bury Council will have the budget to support organisations and schools with the canopy over the next year. Everyone is encouraged to take part in creating this special gift to Her Majesty by planting, and celebrating, trees at home, and within their community⁴

A funding allocation will be agreed at a later Cabinet meeting following the announcing of the scheme in May 2021.

1 ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS - <https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/documents/s22143/version%204%20CA.pdf>

2 Plan-making - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>

3 PLANT A TREE FOR THE JUBILEE - <https://www.coolearth.org/projects/queens-green-canopy/>

4 The Queen's Green Canopy <https://queensgreencanopy.org>

250 electric vehicle charging points

The Conservative Group have repeatedly called on the Council to install electric car charging points across the Borough, but little has been done other than warm words.

- (i) Little attempt has been made to comprehensively introduce electric vehicle charging points on any of the designs for property designs across the Borough.
- (ii) Little attempt has been made to generate income for the Council from electric vehicle charging points, either as a percentage of the electricity provided, or at all.
- (iii) No attempt has been made by the Council to install street light charging points across the borough despite the Conservatives calling for this since 2018⁵.

The Conservative Group believe there should be more charging points across all six townships to encourage residents to switch but also provide the infrastructure to enable the switch. This budget amendment proposes:

- 50 Electric Car Charging Points
- 200 Street Light EV Chargers

There are Councils across the country racing ahead in providing infrastructure, Bury should not be left behind.

Prestwich Carbon Benches - £75,000

The Conservative Group are committed to improving the environment in our towns. Over the years the air we breathe has been affected. A recent study published by the INRIX outlined that the A56 which runs through Prestwich is ranked 5th in the league for most congested roads outside of London. The decision of the Labour Council to narrow the road has contributed to the chaos. Air Pollution in Prestwich is high and the A56 congestion is a huge factor in these high levels.

The actions of the Labour Council will be suffered for years to come but the Conservative Group believe we must improve the air quality for residents. This budget amendment commits to bringing down the pollution in Prestwich through installing 4 new benches to absorb air pollution.

Using a vertical installation of moss, the bench can absorb as much pollution as 275 trees in 1 percent of the space. The World Health Organization estimates that 7 million premature deaths occur each year from air pollution, making it one of the largest environmental health risks in the world⁶.

The bench is about 13 feet high and can hold up to 1,682 pots of moss, planted in the vertical garden. The moss acts to filter out particulate matter, absorb CO₂ and remove soot, dirt, and other pollutants. The use of moss, which hosts bacteria, both work to absorb particulate matter in the range of 0.1 microns to 10 microns⁷.

Home Run App, £30,000

School traffic has been reduced by a third in Wiltshire and Buckinghamshire through the use of Home Run App. The App would be delivered and administered through web console for the Council and Schools as well as mobile devices for parents and pupils. The app facilitates car-pooling and provides school data to encourage parents to stop driving to schools.

This will⁸:

- Access to real school commute data
- Reduction in vehicle emissions and cars on the road
- Healthier more active children
- Empower children communities to improve their daily commutes
- Ensure impactful solutions and meaningful communications

We would contract with Home App to ensure all every school in Bury is signed up, working to reduce the number of cars on the school run on our roads. This will be implemented subject to the social distancing rules and the Coronavirus, this may need to be delayed until 2022/23.

⁵ Wandsworth Council now have c600 lamppost column charging points and free-standing fast points. Funding can be had for dedicated bays through partnership and funded by the Conservative Government's Office of Low Emission Vehicles – up to 75% funded.

⁶ 7 million premature deaths annually linked to air pollution - <https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/air-pollution/en/>

⁷ This City Bench Absorbs More Air Pollution Than A Grove Of Trees - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2018/03/20/this-city-bench-absorbs-more-air-pollution-than-a-grove-of-trees/?sh=14ced6b6b8d8>

⁸ Home Run How it Works. www.cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/documents/s129359/appendix%201%20Home%Run20Pilot.pdf

Managing parks and green spaces better

The London Borough of Wandsworth created a staff mutual from its in-house maintenance service, reducing its spending on parks by 20%. This budget amendment proposes to follow this model and set up a staff mutual⁹.

Parks maintenance costs were £1.9 million a year in 2020-21, a 20% reduction in costs would create a saving of £380,000.

Street Cleaning – No cost

This budget amendment ensures the frequency of street cleaning in all residential areas and on estates that have their roads and pavements blighted by rubbish is effectively managed. Any new plans to increase the frequency or change the street cleaning will be properly implemented and maintained for the longer term – not just for local elections.

‘Carbon cost’ and money cost in every report – No cost

All Council reports to include the Carbon Cost and money cost in every report. This will ensure the Council stays focused in achieving the plan to be a Carbon neutral Council.

The cost in terms of:

- (a) carbon expended by a particular course of action; and
- (b) the monetary cost: *should both become standard features added to every report produced or co-produced by the Council, included in the template for each report, ready to be calculated, never avoided.*

This will ‘hard-bake’ the carbon cost of each set of actions, and the comparative money cost for all proposals, into the management of the Council.

Bins Emptied or your money back

The Conservative Group have been 100% against the Labour Councils policy of reducing bin collection in Bury to every three weeks. This is a policy which the Conservative Group have called on the Council to reverse at a number of budgets and elections over the last decade.

However, the Conservative Group recognise that to restore grey bin collections to every two weeks as a minimum for all residents would incur a cost of around £1.2 million which would be a recurring revenue cost of £1.2m per year.

The Conservative Group acknowledge the Council have invested in fleet renewal, although not electric bin trucks, the Council have finally invested and started to implement a fleet replacement strategy. The Operations department are actively reviewing routes and looking at ways to improve bin collections.

The Conservative Group are committed to ensuring residents grey bins are collected. We therefore in this alternative budget propose a contact with residents. Every time a resident report that their rubbish has not been collected, they will receive £10 back on their council tax bill. This is providing that they have not received an e-mail due to operational matters which means their bin will be collected the following day. This policy will be capped at £120 per year per resident.

The grey bin policy will allow Bury Council to carefully manage and review the performance of the Operational Department. No resident should have to suffer and not have their grey bin collected.

£36 for 5 items means 5 items

The Conservative Group note that Fly tipping is a serious issue in our borough, and convoluted algorithms that make you get a calculator out to get rid of some ladders don’t help anyone.

This amendment simplifies waste tariffs and make it easier to dispose of bulky household items simply and cost-effectively.

- Reduce the cost of collection to £30 for 5 items
- Simplify the bulky collection algorithm to ensure that one item actually means one item
- Reduce fly-tipping in our borough and support our residents, supporting a cleaner community

⁹ New staff mutual organisation manages key council services - <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/news/article/13025>

Increase fines for early payment of fly-tipping

We will take tougher action against fly tipping in our borough. Fly tipping fines will be increased to the legal maximum.

Increase fines for littering to the legal maximum and early payment to 75% of the maximum

Fines will be increased to the maximum, if someone litters, they will be fined. Westminster and Haringey impose the full £150 fine.

As in the Alternative Budget in 2020, we would initially introduce a 25% discount for early payment – in line with the fly-tipping fines – until further impact analysis can be done, but with a view to having no discount for early payment.

Introduce fines for littering from a motor vehicle

In 2018, councils were given powers to fine car owners if litter was thrown from their car, whether or not it could be proven that they were driving. Bury has not yet used this power and the Conservative group called for this in 2020. This amendment introduces fines to clamp down on littering.

Engine idling fines £80

The Conservative Group note a motion tabled by the Liberal Democrats which proposed engine idling fines at school, despite full Council support nothing appears to have been achieved. As in the Conservative Group 2020 alternative budget fines for engine idling will be introduced at £80. This not intended as a revenue-raising proposal, but it is likely that a small surplus would arise.

The Conservative Group note the Press Release from Bury Council in 2020: *No idling – our children’s air is too important*¹⁰

Promoting a Healthy lifestyle

Outdoor Gyms and playgrounds

£450,000 investment to upgrade facilities and create outdoor gyms for residents. This extra funding will support the wider strategy to develop sports pitches and playable spaces to improve the health of the Borough with this programme focusing on the well-being and development of our children.

The new play areas will not only include traditional play equipment but will offer opportunities to encourage more innovative, dynamic and active play with natural play elements. The additional funding aims to ensure play facilities address any inequalities of provision, are sustainable and achieve positive health outcomes for children and young people.

£1 million investment in Leisure Facilities

The Conservative Group recognise that the Council has not invested adequately in the towns Leisure Centres. The Centres play a vital role in our Borough to ensure we promote and help to live a healthy life.

Investing in Leisure Facilities does bring savings to the Council whilst also improving the health and wellbeing of residents. Bury Council will improve the sport and leisure provision for residents which will help to improve workforce skills, tackle anti-social behaviour as well as provide access for people with disabilities.

The upgrade will include space that could be occupied by community health practitioners which would provide an income for the Council. The investment will allow for major improvements to the gym, fitness studios, a new spa and upgraded changing rooms.

Council-run leisure facilities – swimming pools, gyms, football pitches and sports halls – are vital to local communities as they contribute to physical and mental wellbeing. The NHS spends hundreds of millions a year treating preventative diseases which could have been avoided by access to active facilities.

This investment in addition to the decarbonisation fund which the Council has already applied for with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

¹⁰ No idling – our children’s air is too important - <https://www.mynewsdesk.com/uk/bury-council/pressreleases/no-idling-our-childrens-air-is-too-important-2961169>

Free Leisure Access for Veterans and serving personnel of the British Armed Forces

The Conservative Group for a number of years have called for support to the Armed Forces and Veterans of our Borough. This amendment gives all serving members of the British Army, Royal Navy and the Royal Air Forces and veterans free access to leisure centres and swimming pools.

Free swimming pool access to support school children in summer holidays

The Conservative Group recognise the need to encourage and support a healthy life. Physical activity is an important part of this the cost of swimming can be a barrier to families, especially families on low incomes. This amendment provides free access to swimming pools to all children resident in Bury.

3G Pitch for Ramsbottom

Come rain or shine, an artificial pitch in Ramsbottom will provide the perfect surface for residents to enjoy and play football on. Unlike natural grass, synthetic turf requires very little water.

Benefits¹¹:

- it is an all-weather surface, which means regardless of the weather or time of year, football matches can continue without the worry of bad conditions or cancelling games.
- 3G surfaces are adaptable to fit your facility's size and budget and you will save money long term from more simple maintenance tasks and playing more games throughout the year.
- There are many finishes to choose from, including two-tone 3G turf, which emulates the look and feel of natural grass, whilst being maintenance friendly.
- A specialised shockpad layer can be included in a synthetic football pitch to absorb impact and reduce risk of injury to players.
- The 3G pitch requires less maintenance than natural grass and with no watering, mowing or weed removal, the 3G turf is an environmentally friendly option.
- Developed for intensive use, the 3G surface is hard-wearing, durable and resilient, meaning more teams, more training and more matches, whilst retaining its look and feel.
- 3G football pitches are designed to meet both amateur and professional levels of play, and
- It provides a consistent and quality playing surface with excellent playing characteristics, including ball bounce and ball roll.

Supporting our Businesses, employment and entrepreneurship

£500,000 Small Business Support and Apprenticeship Scheme

The Conservative Group note that businesses in Bury have suffered greatly over the last year and the Council needs to provide more support on top of the millions the received from Central Government.

To promote micro-businesses, including those who are registered at home businesses, grants will be provided. Match funding up to £2,500 in business support will help businesses thrive and create a micro-business boom in Bury.

As part of the funding, the Council will support Small Businesses, those who employ between 10-49 employees. Apprenticeship grants will be given to those who take on an apprentice living in Bury. £1,000 will be given to businesses with a maximum of two per business. The aspiration is for 100 apprenticeships to be created within the private sector.

A discretionary grant scheme will also be created and used to further support businesses with need of financial assistance to keep operating. The Grant funding will cover a range of sectors including but not exclusive to, Kennels, catteries, dog groomers, coach firms and airport transfer companies haven't been forced to close during the current lockdown, but their trade has been massively impacted.

The funding will also include support to community facility which is open to members of the community to access, such as village halls and community centres.

¹¹ Benefits Of The 3G Football Pitch - <https://www.etcsports.co.uk/benefits-3g-football-pitch/>

Bury Council will provide support to businesses which have not received any of the grants from central government or any other previous Council scheme. Grants of up to £2,500 will be provided. £125,000 will be ringfenced for this support.

Supporting Hackney and Private Hire Taxis

The Conservative Group for many years have called on extra support to the Hackney and Private Hire taxis. We recognise that the fees are high and the Council needs to do more to support. The current Taxi driver license fee (valid for 3 years costs £180¹². This amendment will reduce the cost of the license fee to £120 over three years.

In September 2019 the Conservative Group tabled a motion to support Taxi Drivers which the Labour Council rejected. The Conservative Group stated, The vital contribution that Bury's taxi drivers make to providing safe and accessible transport, including for many of the Borough's elderly, disabled and younger residents.

That as the Licensing Authority Bury MBC, must do all it can to support the Borough's hard working taxi drivers and play it's part in ensuring the trade provides a sustainable income for local drivers and their families¹³.

To further support the Hackney and Private Hire Taxi's this amendment proposes the establishment of a VOSA MOT Testing Station scheme. This will enable competition and choice for Hackney and Private Taxi Drivers in Bury.

Supporting our Residents and Communities and Young People

Introduce a Council Tax relief scheme on moving into work from universal credit

The Conservative Group believe more can be done to support residents across our Borough move into jobs and off Universal Credit. This alternative budget would introduce a 6-week period before Council Tax started to the taxpayer.

The Conservative Group believes the Council should support residents back to work. This would incentivise people returning to work and give them more time to get their finances in order as they start new jobs.

£100,000 Emergency Funding Grant for residents suffering hardship

The Conservative Group note the effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on residents. The Council needs to support the most vulnerable, some who have never been in debt, but the effect of the pandemic has left them needing support. This amendment created a £100,000 discretionary fund for the Council to be able to support residents with emergency payments.

If a resident is in a crisis or has an emergency that is outside of their control the Council will support. Emergency funding grants up to £250 will be provided.

Install a defibrillator in each town

The Conservative Group acknowledge the importance of defibrillators and the important role they play in helping to save lives. The network in Bury is growing across the borough but more needs to be done to ensure there are publicly accessible defibrillators. The Council will install one publicly accessible defibrillator in each town at a convenient location working in partnership with the Councillors for each town.

To support our Tenant Resident Associations the Conservative Group, propose to install defibrillators in public Halls funded via the Housing Revenue Account where appropriate.

25% Council Tax reduction for Foster Carers

The Conservative Group note the increasing use of Fostering Agencies in Bury. To support and encourage residents to become foster carers a 25% Council Tax discount will be applied. All registered foster carers of Bury Council (Bury Fostering Service) will receive the discount.

¹² Taxi licensing fees - <https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10980>

¹³ NOTICES OF MOTION - <https://councildecisions.bury.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=8580>

Welcome new residents to Bury

The 2030 Let's do it vision is a one which makes Bury a fantastic place to live, work and socialise. The Conservative Group believe the Council should welcome all new residents to the Borough and inform them of local information, key contact numbers, who their local Councillors are and who the Member of Parliament is as well encouraging them to sign up to the Councils digital services.

The welcome pack would be sent when a new resident register for Council Tax with Bury Council. The Conservative Group believe we must welcome our residents to Bury and ensure they are equipped with the key contact information to enjoy our great town and the amenities on offer.

Community Fund

To support community groups and events a Community Fund will be created for each Council Ward. All Councillors will have a £1,000 fund to support community organisation and school activities within their Wards. This fund will be at the discretion of Ward Councillors. On a regular basis the Council will promote the scheme via Social media and general communications with residents and community organisations to raise awareness of the scheme.

£50,000 Mental Health Fund

Creation of a £50,000 Mental Health Fund to improve the health and wellbeing within the Borough. Grants will be available to individuals, organisations and groups for wellbeing projects delivered within the Borough.

The funding will also be used to pilot mental health first aiders as part of a campaign to transform mental wellbeing in Bury. This has been inspired by the Dean Russell MP and the partnership with Watford & West Herts Chamber of Commerce¹⁴.

Addition capacity to support children

The Conservative Group note the need for more front-line staff to support young people. There are gaps in the system which need to be fixed quickly. This budget amendment creates extra capacity and provides £400,000 for:

- 2 Educational Psychologists
- 2 Occupational Therapists
- 3 Mental Health Workers
- 3 Counsellors

Bury Council Graduate Scheme

The Conservative Group note the Councils strategy of continually to recruit Senior Managers at the top of the organisation. This amendment provides an extra £150,000 to create 6 graduate roles across the Council. The entry level roles will be reprofiled from vacant position and used to create 6 graduate roles. Supporting graduates and bringing fresh ideas into the Council is what Bury needs.

Providing a First-Class education for young people

Extra tuition for school children from lower income families – No Cost

The Conservative Group recognise that more support is needed for our young people and the Council can support this. This amendment welcomes the support in extra funding being put into Bury Schools by the Conservative Government.

This amendment also recognises all the hard work by Conservative Councillors and the Member of Parliament for Bury South in securing a new High School for Radcliffe.

The Conservative Group also believe Bury must strive for the best and endeavour to provide a first-class education for young people. In this, improving Social mobility for our children from lower income families is vital to closing the attainment gap and improving their life chances.

¹⁴ Watford MP and Chamber of Commerce launch Mental Health First Aid project - <https://www.deanrussell.co.uk/news/watford-mp-and-chamber-commerce-launch-mental-health-first-aid-project>

A voucher scheme would be introduced by Bury Council to set up and assist schools in encouraging primary school children on Pupil Premium to access established third party tuition. Bury Council will work with a third-party provider to enable after school tuition for English and Maths¹⁵.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Learning Fund - £50,000

The Conservative Group note that Greater Manchester is home to some of the world's greatest advancements in science and engineering.

Two of the top ten discoveries by university academics and researchers were made at The University of Manchester. Birth of the first working computer Two University Manchester scientists are credited with running the world's first stored programme computer. In the late 1940's and early 1950's they produced a series of breakthroughs in the early development of the computer. The contraceptive pill - Herchel Smith, a researcher at the University of Manchester, who in 1961 developed an inexpensive way of producing chemicals that can stop women ovulating during their monthly menstrual cycle¹⁶.

Manchester has some very famous sons in physics with the discovery of the electron (J. J. Thomson, 1897), Proton (Rutherford, 1917) and the neutron by James Chadwick in 1934. All of these discoveries were by scientists either educated (Chadwick and Rutherford) or born (Thomson) in Manchester.

Manchester is home to a range of museums such as the Museum of Science and Industry which focuses on the success of the city's developments in Science, Technology and Industry.

With all this deep history, the Conservative Group are committed to improving the education and promotion of STEM in schools. This budget amendment will create a £50,000 STEM Learning Reserve with the sole focus to promote STEM related learning.

The reserve will allow the creation for Bury to host the 'STEM Festival of Learning'. An annual festival which will be funded by the Council for two years taking place in one of the towns Civic Venues. The festival will take place during school holidays with pop-up exhibitions and a range of activities to promote STEM.

Throughout the year there will be pop-up events across the town's libraries, promoting STEM and utilising the new books and digital offerings from the £50,000 Library service investment.

The STEM Learning reserve includes the funding necessary for Public Relations and advertising. The Council will invite partners for the first year at no cost with a £25,000 reserve for the second year. Future years will be funded through sponsorship. The festival will be run by Bury Council partnering with Greater Manchester businesses, education establishments, charities and third-party organisations involved in STEM.

The STEM Learning festival not only celebrates our deep history but also gives a platform to invest and inspire the next generation of Great Mancunian Scientists, Engineers, Developers and Mathematicians. This will enable Bury to be a beacon Council for STEM both in Greater Manchester and across the United Kingdom.

The STEM Festival of Learning invests in the young people of today to be the leaders of tomorrow.

£50,000 Investment in books and digital resources for Bury library service

The Conservative Group note the decline in the Library Service following the Labour Councils decision to close libraries across the borough. A £50,000 investment to the library service will be ringfenced for the purchase on new books and the digital offer to encourage reading both online and at home.

The investment will ensure the Library Service is equipped with the latest titles to support reading across the Borough.

Teachers will be able to use the library service offer to support their lessons. An offer will be developed in partnership with the Council and Schools forum which will enable books to be sent to schools, if needed, to support learning of all ages – this will include e-book access for home schooling and homework.

Although the Labour Council reduced the Library Service offer in the borough this amendments ensures there is extra investment to promote learning across Bury.

¹⁵ Bury Council would negotiate and promote the voucher scheme working closely with the Head Teachers Forum in Bury. The scheme would be administered by the primary schools. This would be funded from the pupil premium grant to schools thus cost neutral to the Council.

¹⁶ Two University of Manchester discoveries in the top ten of all time - <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/two-university-of-manchester-discoveries-in-the-top-ten-of-all-time/>

Investing in our Towns

Saving the Civic Venues

The Conservative Group note Bury Labour Council are consulting to close three of Bury's civic venues in the same year we've been made Greater Manchester's inaugural Town of Culture. This amendment stops this potential, fully costed closure to safeguard Civic Venues and jobs.

The Elizabethan Suite, the Longfield Suite, and Ramsbottom Civic Hall are an important part of our communities. For years they have been used for weddings, entertainment, and local groups, who rely on these venues as a central meeting point at the heart of their communities. They have hosted events and welcomed people from across Bury, Greater Manchester, and people from across the country. They are a significant part of our town and the Bury Conservative Group believes that they should remain part of our town, especially in the year when Bury is Greater Manchester's inaugural Town of Culture.

We have seen the importance of our civic venues through Bury Council's fantastic efforts to use them as vaccination centres, with Ramsbottom Civic Hall becoming available as a vaccination site just last week. We need to retain these venues as community hubs and expand their usage from one-off events to all-year-round use at the heart of our community. This will mean ensuring that they have the investment necessary from Bury Council for them to make a positive return on public investment. By having the right plan in place, we can provide a fantastic destination for events and activities in our borough whilst simultaneously supporting the Council's finances to allow investment in other areas.

The Conservative Group believe This short-term approach to Bury's cultural heritage has been tried before. This is the same Bury Labour Party that authorised the sale of LS Lowry's "A Riverbank" in order to plug holes in public finances in 2007, a decision grossly offensive to both the public and the public purse. This consultation to shutter civic venues is expected to save the council £250,000 a year, whereas Bury Labour's newly-expanded Cabinet now costs taxpayers over £120,000 a year. As the Guardian said back in 2006: "wouldn't they be better auctioning off a councillor or two?"¹⁷

We want these venues to stay part of our community and we are actively exploring proposals for how this can be achieved. We do not believe that the closures that Bury's Labour Council are proposing are necessary, and we shall detail our plans in due course.

To further support the Civic Venues there will be a strategy to improve the external sponsorship of the Civic Venues. 15% of the Civic Venues budget will be will be will be the target for external sponsorship to improve the overall running costs of the venues.

Ramsbottom Civic Hall will in part be used as a Armed Forces and Youth Unemployment Hub. The Hub will aim to improve the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant by working Bury Council, ensuring the covenant is both understood and honoured¹⁸. The Hub will take on a coordination role working closely with the Bury Council Armed Forces Champion as well as key stakeholders from the public and charity sectors.

The Hub will deliver support to education and employment to health, wellbeing and welfare support. As well as working to improve the delivery of the Armed Forces Covenant across the Borough the Hub will also increase sustainability and governance structures embedding the Covenant into the routine delivery of services from public agencies, private businesses and charitable bodies.

The Youth Unemployment Hub will support young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training and will be run from the Ramsbottom Civic Hall.

The amendment not only keeps the venues open but will invest £1.5 million for improvements. This is funding on top of the anticipated grants from BEIS.

¹⁷ Sold: one Lowry. For all the wrong reasons - <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/artblog/2006/nov/17/lowrytobesold>

¹⁸ Delivering the Armed Forces Covenant Locally - https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LGA%20Covenant%20report%20final%20May_0.pdf

Civic Hall for Radcliffe

The Conservative Group note the ongoing Radcliffe Strategic Regeneration Framework and a webinar on Radcliffe Regeneration planned for 11th March. The current plan for the regeneration includes a 'Civic Hub' which will be used in the town centre to house community space, council services, retail, leisure and workspace.

This amendment reprofiles the regeneration £10 million fund to build a Civic Hall. Radcliffe is in need for a Civic Hall and this funding will be used to build a modern Civic Hall for residents which will be incorporated into the overall Civic Hall strategy detailed in this paper.

Implementation of Town Centre Wi-Fi

Ramsbottom and Radcliffe will be the trial towns for WIFI offered by Bury Council as part of the Town Centre regeneration. This amendment proposes to install Wi-Fi hotspots on the central streets of Ramsbottom and the centre of Radcliffe.

The Wi-Fi will have a front interface to allow users to easily find shops, restaurants, attractions, events, offers and services in the town centre. This will help support local businesses.

The scheme will be a trial and will be reviewed after 18 months. £30,000 has been set aside for each town¹⁹. Any income generated via the platform will be reinvested to ensure the pilot areas continue and the potential to expand to Prestwich, Bury Town Centre and the Whitefield.

£900,000 EXTRA support our World Famous Bury Market

The Conservative Group note the importance of Bury Market to our town both from the visitors it attracts from across the UK and the revenue it generates for the Council. The pandemic has had a huge impact on the hardworking traders and this amendment acknowledges this and provides support.

£500,000 extra capital investment to the Market to ensure its future is safeguarded for years to come. All market traders will receive a 3-month 50% rent reduction followed by a 5% reduction in rent. This £420,000 package of support along with the national government grants will help market traders through the next year. Market fees will be frozen in the next financial year to continue the support of the Council to Market Traders.

£6 million for Whitefield Health and Wellbeing Hub

The Conservative Group note that the Council made the decision to close Whitefield Library in 2018. Since then, there has been promise of a health and wellbeing village for the Uplands area but nothing has materialised.

This amendment provides £6 million funding to redevelop the Whitefield Library site. A new Library, Health and wellbeing hub and community space will be developed.

The funding will be reprofiled from the current capital programme for a £6 million Investment Fund.

Whitefield Parking Strategy

Conservative Councillors for Pilkington Park have listened to business concerns regarding parking in the A56 corridor. A strategy will be formed working jointly with Whitefield Business Group and local businesses to review and improve parking in the to support business and the night-time economy.

Purchase Gigg Lane

The Conservative Group for many years has called on the Council to purchase Gigg Lane in order to safeguard the asset for future years. Through purchasing the ground, the asset will be secured for the community.

The council will be able to establish a community hub at the heart of our town, and use the ground for events, training, and other community engagement. This move will allow Bury Council to ensure the future of football in Bury, in whatever form that may be.

19 Kendal Town Centre WiFi - <https://www.southlakeland.gov.uk/business-and-trade/town-and-village-projects/kendal-town-centre-wifi/#gsc.tab=0>

Investing in our Highways

£1 Million Fund to repair 18,000 Potholes

We will work with communities and Highways Officers to identify priorities. The Conservative Group proposal will ensure around 3,000 potholes are filled in each of the 6 Towns in our Borough. Giving each Town an equal share is a priority to ensure we put an end to favouritism of projects by the current administration.

No matter which Party represents an area this amendment ensures there is equal funding. This funding is in addition to any new grants anticipated from the Department of Transport²⁰

£10 million Highways Investment

The Conservative Group acknowledge the current funding for Highways and this amendment increases the funding to £10 million. This will help improve roads across the Borough.

Giving each ward an equal share was a priority to ensure we put an end to perceived favouritism of the past.

The amendment also includes funding for a new Pedestrian Crossing/Island on Market Street in Tottington. Many residents, over a number of years, have thought that more traffic safety measures in the vicinity of where Bury Road becomes Market Street in Tottington is needed to make crossing the road in peak traffic hours much safer.

Tottington Councillors have requested that Bury Council look into installing a pedestrian crossing/island on numerous occasions, but they have always declined to do so.

More recently with the arrival of a new petrol station on Market Street, local residents have been calling for this given the much-increased traffic volumes. Our latest request to the Council for this has been declined once again. Therefore, we have set up this petition to show them the strength of feeling on this matter which will hopefully get them to reconsider this.

£200,000 for Road Safety Initiatives

We believe there needs to be further investment in road safety schemes across our town. The last year has been no different and lives have been lost on our roads. This £150,000 extra funding will be on top of the £50,000 capital programme to improve road safety including but not exclusive to, new speed limits, new signage, new road markings and more.

This represents a significant investment to improve road safety.

Making Bury more efficient

Bringing an end to excessive Labour Council payments

The Cabinet under the current administration increased from seven to nine in May 2020. Deputy Cabinet Members increased to 10 with some portfolios having two Councillors in support. Nearly every Labour Councillor is in receipt of at least one Special Responsibility Allowance.

The Conservative Group do not believe in job creation or roles with extra payments at the cost of front-line services. The financial situation at the Council is not one which affords for Councillors to be in receipt of excessive payments.

The Conservative Group put forward a motion at the Annual Council Meeting of 2020 which had the support of all other parties to stop the increase in Cabinet Positions. The Labour Party voted this through for themselves, this amendment reverses that strategy

This Alternative Budget brings an end to job creation and non-roles such as *First Deputy Leader* at the cost of the Bury taxpayer. A new Councillor Leadership would consist of:

- 7 Cabinet Members including the Leader of the Council
- 0 Deputy Cabinet Members
- 10% cut to all Councillors in receipt of a Special Responsibility Allowance, including outside bodies.

²⁰ Funding to fix equivalent of 10 million potholes allocated to local authorities - <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/funding-to-fix-equivalent-of-10-million-potholes-allocated-to-local-authorities>

Reducing the Cost and size of the Town Hall

The Conservative Group note the recent recruitment drive of the Council in the Joint Executive Team and ever-expanding cost of the Town Hall to taxpayers. This budget amendment radically reduces the cost of the town hall to enable more investment in our towns, communities, creating a first-class education system and protecting our beautiful greenspace.

The Office of the Chief Executive will be scrapped and replaced with a new Managing Director Post with a new responsibilities in line but not limited to the Bury 2030 Strategy. The role will continue to act as Head of the Council's Paid Service and undertake all duties and responsibilities as defined in Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act. (1989).

The 'Chief Executive' budget will be reduced by 10% as well as reducing the Corporate Core budget by £500,000.

The Joint Executive Team (JET) will be reduced by 2 posts saving £350,000. This change in the Senior Leadership Team structure will be part of a full review of pay and grading structure and terms and conditions for all Senior Managers at the Council. A new organisation structure will be drawn up along with a full review to gain an understanding all in-house skill. Any support required for this will be funded from the Transformation budget. Following this review Bury Council will be a Council fit for the future, more efficient and a slimmed down organisation that delivers high quality services to residents. The plan to reassess jobs and pay scales will help embed the Council become more efficient and bring an end to a top-heavy organisation.

Bury Council at present spends millions on Agency and Consultancy each year. Both of these budgets will be reduced by £250,000 and £300,000 respectively. A shift to having permanent staff instead of temporary, short term contracts costing hundreds of pounds a day will be implemented.

A shared service will be explored and implemented for Legal services and back office services. Any partner needed to explore this will be funded from the transformation budget. Sharing administrative staff with another authority would not mean any reduction in front line workers such as social workers or health workers. As a result of economies of scale, only the number of managers needed would be reduced, with clearer lines of accountability, ending waste, and the potential for fraud.

Transformation will be championed within the Council with full support to the £5 million capital programme for digital and IT. The Bury 2030 strategy will be fully supported to enable Bury to become a beacon digital Council. As part of the transformation there will be an enhanced focus for a paperless Council.

The digital improvements will improve the customer experience and will undertake a series of key projects to improve the way residents and visitors interact with the Council. Full Customer Journey mapping will be undertaken to improve the journeys and make them smoother. Where necessary, new technology will be harnessed to enhance the current offer but also improve, this includes a data-cleansing of all the Councils data both on and offline and an improvement to Councils servers, shifting from a local server to cloud based offer. Allowing the Council to build greater insight to understand demands and adapt services accordingly will be a key benefit.

The amendment proposes a full review into the Revenues and Benefits area of the Council, funded from the transformation reserve. This will provide investment in systems to improve Council Tax Collection, Business rates and overall debt management. It is anticipated that this would improve the Councils collections thus reduce the overall bad debt provision.

Capital Strategy Governance – No cost

The Conservative Group recognises that Governance at Bury Council has been weak in recent years, investments have been made which could have been negated with a thorough businesses case.

A Capital Strategy Review Group (CSRG) will be created to review all financial aspects of the Council's capital programme. This Group will review and ensure the strategic direction of the programme to ensure the outcome are aligned with the Bury 2030 "Let's do it" vision. The CSRG will ensure that all capital projects have over £250,000 have a viable Business case and that Value for Money is delivered by the Council for residents.

Following experience of recent years, the CSRG will ensure there is oversight and strict governance procedures, monitor the expenditure, funding requirements for the capital programme and the revenue impacts.

All significant projects include those with a minimal expenditure of £250,000, require residential engagement, may have issues due to sensitivity, involves matters which form part of the strategic aims of the Council, have an

important historical context and/or carry a major risk.

To ensure there is governance in place, all developments and regeneration projects £250,000 and over will have to produce:

- Strategic Outline Case (SOC)
- Outline Business Case (OBC)
- Full Business Case (FBC)

All business cases must include the:

- The Strategic Case
- The Economic Case
- The Commercial Case
- The Financial Case
- The Management Case

All projects under the value of £250,000 will only require a Business Justification Case only. This must include, where possible, the level of residential engagement, sensitives, historical context of the project, strategic aim of the project. This will be reviewed and agreed by Senior Officers, The Cabinet Member for Finance and the Project Manager for the project.

All business cases will require the approval of the CSRG. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny will receive a briefing. Some projects may have a high-level budget with spend within the programme, detailed spends will be required for such projects and must be signed off by the CSRG.

Through introducing governance to all stages this will ensure Value for Money to the residents of Bury. Therefore, the Council will be able to gain a full understanding on how a specific scheme will influence the overall strategy, the local economy, officers and resources of the Council.

Appendix 1:

Conservative Group Amendment 2021/22

Proposal	Total Cost	Revenue Recurring Cost	Revenue One-Off Cost	Capital Cost
	£	£	£	£
5 Hi Tech CCTV Cameras	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.012
50 Electric Charging Points	0.023	0.000	0.000	0.023
4 City Tree Air Filter Devices	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070
200 Street Light EV Chargers	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100
Outdoor Gyms and Playgrounds	0.450	0.000	0.000	0.450
Ramsbottom Swimming Pool	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500
Ramsbottom 3G Pitch	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100
Wi-Fi in Ramsbottom and Radcliffe Town Centres	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060
Investment in Bury Market	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500
Castle Leisure Investment	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.500
Purchase Gigg Lane	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000
Increase the Pothole Fund	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.300
Road Safety Initiatives	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.300
Highways and Road Safety	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150
Digital Investment to improve council tax and debt collection	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.300
Investment in Civic Centres	1.500	0.000	0.000	1.500
Commercial Property Sale	(1.000)	0.000	0.000	(1.000)
Reduce vehicle replacement capital programme	(4.000)	0.000	0.000	(4.000)
Reduce Digital budget	(1.500)	0.000	0.000	(1.500)
Reduce capital budget for strategic investments	(0.400)	0.000	0.000	(0.400)
Queens Green Canopy	0.100	0.000	0.100	0.000
Home Run App	0.030	0.000	0.030	0.000
STEM Learning Fund	0.050	0.000	0.050	0.000
Exam Tuition Offer	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Creation of a Local Plan	0.100	0.000	0.100	0.000
Mental Health Grants	0.050	0.000	0.050	0.000
Welfare Emergency Funding	0.100	0.000	0.100	0.000
Small Business Support and Apprenticeship Scheme	0.500	0.000	0.500	0.000
Defibrillators in each town	0.009	0.000	0.009	0.000
CCTV Running Costs	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.000
Welcome Booklet for New Residents	0.005	0.000	0.005	0.000
50% reduction in rent for 3 months for Bury Market Traders	0.300	0.000	0.300	0.000

Increase in Council tax recovery linked to system investment (0.25%)	(0.212)	(0.212)	0.000	0.000
Fees and Charges – Engine idling, fly tipping, littering, rationalisation of bulky fee structure	(0.012)	(0.012)	0.000	0.000
Fees and charges – buildings, land registry, legal	(0.016)	(0.016)	0.000	0.000
Reduce taxi licence fees	0.066	0.066	0.000	0.000
5% Reduction in market trader fees	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000
£10 for missed bin collections	0.004	0.004	0.000	0.000
Commercial Property – loss of income due to sale	0.052	0.052	0.000	0.000
Establishment of VOSA MOT Testing Station	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Managing Green Spaces	(0.380)	(0.380)	0.000	0.000
Free swimming pool access to school children during Sumer holidays	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000
Free access to leisure centres for all serving and military veterans	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.000
Additional capacity to support children - 2 Educational Psychologists, 2 Occupational Therapists, 3 Mental Health Workers, 3 Councillors	0.400	0.400	0.000	0.000
25% reduction n council tax for foster carers	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000
Creation of 6 Graduate Posts	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000
Books for Schools	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000
Defibrillator running costs	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.000
End funding for trade union facility	(0.100)	(0.100)	0.000	0.000
Dis-establish Deputy Cabinet Members	(0.010)	(0.010)	0.000	0.000
Reduce Cabinet members to 7	(0.025)	(0.025)	0.000	0.000
Reduce Office of the Chief Executive Budget	(0.015)	(0.015)	0.000	0.000
Reduction in Special Responsibility Allowances	(0.017)	(0.017)	0.000	0.000
Remove Chief Executive Post and replace with Managing Director Post	(0.030)	(0.030)	0.000	0.000
Reduce Senior Manager Costs	(0.350)	(0.350)	0.000	0.000
Remove Corporate Capacity Budget	(0.500)	(0.500)	0.000	0.000
Retain civic centres	0.132	0.132	0.000	0.000
Add back dimming lights option	0.020	0.020	0.000	0.000
Continue discretionary budgets for members	0.051	0.051	0.000	0.000
Contribution to reserves	0.101	0.000	0.101	0.000
Gross Position	(0.115)	(0.426)	1.346	(1.035)
Reduce Main Precept by 0.44%	0.381	0.381	0.000	0.000
1.5% Adult Social Care Precept	(1.302)	(1.302)	0.000	0.000
TOTAL	(1.036)	(1.347)	1.346	(1.035)

Funding the Proposals

The Capital proposals will be met as follows:

The proposed proposals will reduce the capital programme by £1.035m. A reduction on borrowing costs has not been factored in due to the fact that some additional leasing costs may be required in the event that some of the planned replacement of vehicles cannot be achieved and required leasing costs over and above those currently budgeted for. Proposals for Whitefield will be funded through the re-purposing of the Radcliffe Investment Fund. Some proposals are expected to achieve grant income/match funding including: Electric Charging Points, Street Light EV Chargers. The figures set out the net budget position.

The Gigg Lane purchase would need to be subject to appropriate due diligence and legal considerations.

The revenue proposals would be funded as follows:

Council Tax

In relation to Council Tax, it is recommended that the Bury element of the Council tax be increased by 3% of which 1.5% relates to the general precept and 1.5% relates to the adult social care levy. An additional contribution to reserves of £0.101m will see general reserves increase from £23.149m to £23.250m at the end of 2021/22. The proposals will reduce the call on reserves in future years. Options to reduce other costs within the Council may be subject formal consultation and equality impact assessments.

S151 Officer Statement (Director of Financial Transformation)

The Local Government Act 2003 places specific responsibilities on the Director of Financial Transformation and the Council's S151 Officer, to report on the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of proposed financial reserves when the authority considering its budget requirement. The council is required to have regard to this report when it sets its budget. There are a range of other safeguards that I must consider to prevent the Local Authority from over committing itself financially, including:

- The balanced budget requirement (England, Scotland and Wales) (Sections 32, 43 and 93 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992);
- The legislative requirement for each local authority to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs (Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972).

Given the uncertainties of economic environment and the scale of the expenditure reductions required and the growing demands on services, there are significant risks facing the council in delivering a balanced budget. In fulfilling the various responsibilities placed on me as a Chief Finance Officer, I have considered the financial risks and these are set out in the budget paper for 2021/22. I have considered the additional proposals as set out in this amendment and the financial impact these will have on the overall financial strategy. In overall terms I am of the view that this revenue budget has been prepared on realistic assumptions and that it represents a robust, albeit challenging budget.

I have also undertaken a risk analysis of the adequacy of the reserves and am confident that the projected balances of £23.2m in 2021/22 are adequate.

Proposed by: Cllr. Nicholas Jones
Leader of the Conservative Group

Seconded by: Cllr. Paul Cropper
Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group

