

Conservative Group Budget Amendment

The Conservative Group proposes an amendment which replaces the Administration proposition in toto with the following, thereby balancing the Budget for 2021-22 and providing a basis for further work in future years.

Starting from the Budget Gap advised by the Executive Director of Finance & Corporate Services, we have identified acceptable savings from the Service Change Plans as detailed in Appendix 1.

To these we have added savings from the introduction of Music Sponsorship and from utilising the surplus available within the Loan Charges Budget.

Overall, this gives a budget surplus for 2021-22 of £8.867m plus £1.400m from COVID-19/Fiscal Flexibilities/Corporate Solutions

From this, we have allocated, as shown in Appendices 1 & 2

- £1.778m to the Health & Social Care Partnership, matching the percentage increase in the Council's Government Grant
- £0.100m to the Autism One Stop Shop in Kirkcaldy
- £0.495m to the Restoration of Leisure Centre opening hours – this would reverse the unpopular and ultimately self-defeating cuts in the availability of swimming pools, etc.
- £0.300m to the Partial Restoration of Recycling Centre opening hours – this would go some way to assisting and encouraging local residents and businesses to recycle more efficiently and responsibly especially once the current restrictions are relaxed.
- £0.250m to Roads Joint Venture Setup Costs (2021/22) – we have investigated the arrangements used successfully for decades in North Lanarkshire and concluded that a similar approach would benefit Fife
- £0.377m to P1 Deferrals – this would fund an automatic right to an additional year of nursery for under-5s, in line with the Scottish Government's policy intention and practice in some councils and aligns with the unanimous decision of Council on February 25th
- £2m to increase the Revenue Budget for roads repairs, recognising the need to match an increase in capital works with a greater level of more ad hoc work
- £0.300m to create an Environmental Enforcement Squad, to bear down on the scourge of Flytipping and similar antisocial practices
- £0.042m to create an additional Planning Enforcement Officer post
- £1.400m to provide Digital Devices and related resources to help Fife's school pupils to fully participate in an increasingly digital world
- The balance of £3.225m to create an Area Commissioning Budget – we continue to note the glacial pace of decentralisation and believe that this stems from the retention of centralised budgetary control. We propose the creation of a Commissioning

Budget to be held at Area level and used to commission work from Council Services and elsewhere, as best fits the needs of the Area. Democratic oversight would come from the Area Committees. This new budget would be available to cover revenue expenditure, including CFCR. There would be as few constraints as possible. Allocation would be purely population-based.