

Amendment by Conservatives – General Fund and Common Good Budgets and Carbon Budget 2025/26

In the name of the Cllr Brooks

It is recommended that Council:

Notes that we have an SNP-led National Government and an SNP-led local government, and that one would expect better traction in local-to-national consultation and consideration for the benefit of the citizens of Aberdeen.

Agree that to date, there has been no measurable benefit realised by Aberdeen having an SNP-led national and local government administrations, amply demonstrated by the following point.

Agree that once again, without reason or justification, Aberdeen City Council is seriously underfunded by the SNP-led Scottish Government, such that Dundee is £865 per person better funded.

Notes therefore, that should there have been parity in the Scottish Government funding, Aberdeen would receive c.£160m more than it currently does.

Agree that the current situation with regard to the proposed remedial action to address home owners affected by RAAC is not satisfactory; and whilst the Council are following the letter of the law, it yields a lack of empathy and lacks the potential for a just outcome for homeowners.

Note that no financial support for those affected by RAAC has been forthcoming from the Scottish Government.

Agree that the decision to make the experimental city centre bus gates (ETRO) into a permanent fixture, was probably the most detrimental economic decision to impact the city centre business community for at least a decade, and could now be the subject of a judicial review funded by Aberdeen citizens and the city centre business community.

Agree that funds need to remain readily available in Council reserves to address the expected financial fall-out of any potential legal consultation and/or action that leads to reversal of the city centre bus gate situation

Agree that Aberdeen Football Club, the highly acclaimed Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust and the Scottish Ice Hockey Champions, Aberdeen Lynx, deserve to be prioritised in the City Centre and Beach Master Plan, with full consideration and engagement

on stadia and facilities fitting for such organisations that can draw 15-20,000 people to the beach area at least fortnightly over a 8-9 month football season.

Agrees that the Beach Ballroom is an iconic part of Aberdeen's history and should remain an active part of its future.

Notes that Aberdeen is the largest city in Scotland without a major running event in the city centre, and has never had an annual city marathon.

Agrees that an annual Granite City Marathon could attract 100's and 1000's of people into the city from all over the world and would showcase the history, architecture and benefits of making this a beach front tourist destination on the doorstep of the highlands.

It is recommended that the Council

1. Instruct the Chief Officer of Finance to establish a 'RAAC recovery Fund', aimed at providing additional financial support to homeowners who are facing financial loss following the discovery of RAAC in their homes
2. Therefore, allocate £1m to the RAAC Recovery Fund from unearmarked reserves, and as part of this instruct the Chief Officer Corporate Landlord to engage with the Torry Community RAAC Campaign Group Management Committee and RAAC affected homeowners (Balnagask) to establish a compensation framework.
3. Instruct the Chief Officer - Finance to write to Scottish Ministers and UK Treasury requesting permission to borrow for the additional costs of acquiring RAAC affected properties at pre-RAAC knowledge values, in line with the UK Government Budgetary Framework.
4. Using the £50,000 allocated in the budget, instruct the Chief Officer – City Development & Regeneration to conduct a feasibility study into an annual 'Granite City Marathon' commencing 2026, and bring forward a report to the Finance and Resources Committee, highlighting the total spend required and potential benefits that could be realised.
5. Agree that the Bus Lane Enforcement earmarked reserve is retained with the purpose of addressing the potential cost of reversing the city centre bus gates.
6. Given the guaranteed residency time of 15-20,000 people in the beach area at least once a fortnight (during the months August to May), Instruct the Chief Officer – Commercial & Procurement Services to re-engage with Aberdeen Football Club and to review the re-prioritisation of the City Centre and Beach Master Plan to include allocating resources in support of Football and Ice Hockey/Leisure stadia/facilities, to realise the full potential of the substantial investment in the Beach area, reporting to Council by December 2025.

	7. Given the need to retain the Beach Ballroom as an active iconic part of the Beach front, instruct the Chief Officer – City Development & Regeneration to outsource its running.
	Balance Sheet Recommendations
1	Agree that the Council needs to find recurring funding solutions to meet recurring costs while retaining prudent reserves that will be available should they be needed, particularly given the wide range of financial risks that remain outside the control of the Council;
2	Having given due regard to the Council’s Financial Resilience Framework measures, Prudential Indicators, and Risk Appetite Statement, approve the General Fund Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix 1;
3	Approve the Prudential Indicators as detailed in Appendix 2;
4	Approve a limit on the annual Cost of Financing Capital at 12% of projected Net Revenue;
5	Approve the Revenue and Capital Reserves Statement for 2025/26 as detailed in Appendix 6 of the report;
6	Approve the use of the Capital Fund to support any financial implications arising from the Council’s support to owners of properties affected by RAAC, see Section 8 of the report; and
7	Agree to continue to retain the Service Concession Reserve to support the commitment to no compulsory redundancies, as a funding source for continued use of the voluntary severance / early retirement scheme (VSER).
	Medium-Term Financial Projections
8	Instruct the Chief Officer – Finance to refresh the Medium Term Financial Strategy and report to the Council by the end of September 2025 in line with the requirements of the budget protocol.
	Risks
9	Instruct the Chief Officer – Finance, to monitor the delivery of the approved budget and advise the Finance and Resources Committee of any in year changes required via the Financial Performance reports.
	Revenue Budget Recommendations

10	Having given due regard to the contents of the report and appendices and taken advice from the Chief Officer - Finance in relation to the use of non-recurring funding, specifically in respect of the use of Reserves; and had due regard to protected characteristics and how the authority could reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage in terms of the Equality Act 2010, approve the use of various savings options to set at least a balanced budget for financial year 2025/26 as detailed in Appendices 3, 4, 5 and 7;
11	Approve funding awards for the Cultural Investment Framework for 2025/26, and indicative funding for the following two years, as detailed in Appendix 3;
12	Note the Commissioning Intentions and approve the Service Standards as described in Appendix 11 of the report, subject to any amendments approved and included in (10) above, noting that the Chief Officer - Finance had confirmed, as far as possible, that the Commissioning Intentions and Service Standards being implemented were consistent with the draft budget 2025/26; and
13	Instruct the Chief Executive, in light of the notified retirement of the current postholder of the Chief Officer – Capital, to commence a recruitment & selection process to consider internal and external applications together, in accordance with Appendix 3 of the Standing Orders: Protocol for Appointment of Chief Officers.
	Annual Revenue Budget Recommendations - Aberdeen City Group
14	Approve the level of funding for the Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership IJB 2025/26 to meet the conditions of the Scottish Government Financial Settlement, with reference to paragraph 6.8 of the report, and as shown in Appendix 4, noting that the IJB will determine how it will balance its budget in March 2025;
15	Approve the fees and charges for the Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Partnership IJB, as shown in Appendix 5;
16	Approve the level of funding for the Council's other group entities and Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs), in 2025/26 with reference to paragraph 6.8 of the report, and as shown in Appendix 4, noting that it will be for the ALEOs themselves to determine how they will balance their budgets; and

17	Instruct the Chief Officer – Finance to give notice to the Board of Directors of NYOP Education (Aberdeen) Ltd to disburse the notified surplus of £908,991 from financial year 2023/24 to Sport Aberdeen (78%) and VSA (22%)
	Taxation Recommendations
18	Approve a Band D equivalent Council Tax rate of £1,594 (7.00% increase (£8.69/mth)) , with effect from 1 April 2025;
19	Impose and levy Council Tax assessments for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 on all chargeable dwellings in Aberdeen City to be paid by the persons liable therefor under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994;
20	Approve an Empty Property Relief Scheme for Aberdeen City with effect from 1 April 2025, as set out in Appendix 3;
21	Impose and levy Non-Domestic Rates assessments for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 on all occupiers in Aberdeen City to be paid by those liable; and
22	Note that the Finance and Resources Committee, 12 February 2025, approved that wider consultation would now be undertaken on the introduction of a Visitor Levy in Aberdeen. Instruct the Chief Officer – Finance to incorporate the forecast financial implications into the Medium Term Financial Strategy as appropriate.
	Integrated Impact Assessments
23	Having considered the IIAs prepared by officers for the budget report, note the further assessment as per Appendix 7 prepared in support of the decisions taken by the council in approving the General Fund and Common Good budgets for 2025/26;
24	Thank all the members of the public that took the time and made the effort to participate and engage in our public consultations during 2024.
	Common Good
25	Approve the Common Good Budget 2025/26 as detailed in the Common Good budget report, modified as detailed in Appendix 6;

26	Note the review of the Common Good Investment Strategy and approve the continuation of the Multi Asset Income Fund investment and planned actions to maintain oversight of the investment performance.
27	Recognise the inextricable link between the General Fund and the Common Good, and approve the inclusion of the Common Good budget, in future, as an Appendix to the General Fund budget report.
	Carbon Budget
28	Approve the Council Carbon Budget 2025/26 including carbon target for 2025/26 of 22,567 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO ₂ e) and note the provisional 5 year carbon budget forecast to 2029/30;
29	Instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to update the carbon budget forecast position, where required, following publication of UK Government Greenhouse Gas reporting conversion factors June 2025;
30	Note the indicative Function/ Cluster carbon budget allocation, as attached at Appendix A [of the report];
31	Instruct the Chief Officer - Strategic Place Planning to liaise with relevant Chief Officers, on any realignment of carbon budget allocations required by changes to legislation, services, operations, targets and plan-making ahead of the 2026 Council Carbon Budget;
32	Note the national policy changes emerging over this 5 year period (paragraphs 3.13 - 3.17 [of the report]) relevant to carbon budget data, methodology and achievable savings;
33	Instruct the Chief Officer – Capital, following approval of the budget in March, to ensure any new projects being put forward to the capital programme include information on the expected operational carbon impact of the development.