

Amendments to Agenda Items

23 February 2021

- **Slide 2: Labour Group Amendment to the Budget (Item 08)**
- **Slides 3-7: Liberal Democrat Group Amendment to the Budget (Item 08)**
- **Slides 8-9: Amendment to the Scheme of Members' Allowances (Item 12)**



Amendment - Item 08 Proposed by Cllr Stone

Amendment: Looking at the budget through the lens of what our children need we are proposing an amendment to the budget that gives us £ 414,725, topped up by £85,275 taken from reserves to £500,000, to spend on a play project across West Northants for children age 3-10 years. This would go someway to meeting some of the needs I have identified.

On opposition group leaders, we suggest 50% of the leader's SRP for the leader of the principal opposition group and 25% for the next largest. And so on.

| | Multiplier | No to Pay | Amount | Total |
|--|------------|-----------|--------------------------|----------|
| Basic Allowance | 1 | 93 | £10,000 | £930,000 |
| Special Responsibility Allowances | | | | |
| Leader | 3 | 1 | £30,000 | £30,000 |
| Deputy Leader | 1.75 | 1 | £17,500 | £17,500 |
| Cabinet member Childrens Statutory Role | 1.66 | 1 | £16,600 | £16,600 |
| Cabinet Members | 1.5 | 7 | £15,000 | £105,000 |
| Shadow Cabinet | 0.5 | 8 | £5,000 | £40,000 |
| Chair of Council | 0.75 | 1 | £7,500 | £7,500 |
| Vice Chair of Council | 0.5 | 1 | £5,000 | £5,000 |
| Chair of Strategic Planning Committee | 1 | 1 | £10,000 | £10,000 |
| Chair of Area Planning Committees | 1 | 3 | £10,000 | £30,000 |
| Chair of Planning Policy | 0 | 1 | £0 | £0 |
| Chair of Licensing Committee | 0.75 | 1 | £7,500 | £7,500 |
| Chair of Audit Committee | 0.75 | 1 | £7,500 | £7,500 |
| Chair Overview & Scrutiny | 1 | 3 | £10,000 | £30,000 |
| Vice Chair Overview & Scrutiny | 0.2 | 3 | £2,000 | £6,000 |
| Chair Pensions Fund | 0 | 1 | £0 | £0 |
| Chair Senior Appointments | 0 | 1 | £0 | £0 |
| Chair Standards | 1 | 1 | £10,000 | £10,000 |
| | | | | £322,600 |
| Saving | | | | |
| | | | Basic Allowance £348,750 | |
| | | | SRA £65,975 | |
| | | | Total £414,725 | |



Amendment - Item 08 Proposed by Cllr Allen

1. Liberal Democrats have been actively involved in the discussions at the Medium-Term Financial Plan and Budget Task and Finish Group, and we want to thank officers for the work put in to prepare the budget. Several elements in the proposed budget follow Liberal Democrat suggestions.
2. In particular, the benefit to our low-income families who were facing having to find 26.5% of their Council Tax bills will now only have to find 20%. This is still a financial hurdle for qualifying families in South Northamptonshire who currently fund 8.5% of their tax bill, but less severe than that originally proposed by the Conservatives. Families in Daventry will see no change as they already have to find 20% and those in Northampton will see a real reduction from their current contributions of 35%.
3. There are some fundamental problems, though, with the proposed budget which we cannot agree with or support.



Amendment - Item 08 Proposed by Cllr Allen

4. Previous years of overspend and financial mismanagement by Conservative administrations at Northamptonshire County Council have reduced both flexibility and reserve levels inherited by the new unitary council. The current Conservative leadership has claimed success in turning round these previous failings but they have, at best, finally balanced the books and leave very little in the corporate kitty.
5. This budget, therefore, is set against the acknowledged endless failings of Conservative financial mismanagement, not only at the County Council but also at Northampton Borough Council which is still chasing the £10m loan to the football club.



Amendment - Item 08 Proposed by Cllr Allen

6. The principles forming the basis of this budget are, in our view, flawed. The choice to impose the maximum possible Council Tax increase has been made not because it is needed for in-year spending, but to rebuild contingencies and reserves. It is wrong to penalise current tax payers for the failings of previous Conservative Leaders to balance their books, which is what taxing heavily to quickly build up contingencies and reserves really means. The suggested approach of averaging Council Tax rises hides the real impact on both Daventry and South Northamptonshire. As these areas have lower current tax rates residents will see substantial increases for years to come. Daventry residents will suffer nearly 6% annual increases and South Northamptonshire residents over 5%.



Amendment - Item 08 Proposed by Cllr Allen

7. Many residents are currently suffering financially through the Covid pandemic, and the impact of Brexit is predicted to add further pressures on household budgets. Liberal Democrats would rather impose lower taxes now when families need the support most and not use their already tight family budgets to make up previous failings of Conservative-led Northamptonshire County Council.
8. We propose, therefore, that the average Council Tax increase is reduced by 1% to 3.99% instead of the higher increase of 4.99% proposed by the Conservatives. This will cost approximately £2m and would be funded by reducing the contribution to contingency funds, which are proposed at £10.1m.
9. Liberal Democrats are disappointed that this first budget for the new council did not show real leadership by allocating funds to support the green agenda and climate change. We propose, therefore, that a budget of £1m is earmarked within the General Fund Reserve Balance of £40m. This reserve represents an arbitrary 12% of the net budget (excluding DSG) and could, we propose, be reduced to £39m without significant impact.



Amendment - Item 08 Proposed by Cllr Allen

10. Allocating this budget would pump prime new initiatives developed during 2021/22 to address climate change and, if we formed the new administration, we would set up a Citizen's Assembly to advise how these initiatives would be identified and delivered. The new council needs to adopt a truly inclusive approach to solve these very real problems relating to climate change. It is foolish to assume that any future council has all of the answers in this area. What is more, In the long term this will have more serious impact than the pandemic. Some (great) initiatives have been started but it is now time for real action and not just to continue to pay lip service.
11. In summary, therefore, Liberal Democrats propose the following amendments to the proposed budget:
 - A reduction in average Council Tax rates from 4.99% to 3.99% funded from contingencies.
 - The establishment of a Climate Emergency Earmarked Reserve £1m funded within the £40.1m General Fund Balance Reserve.



Amendment - Item 12 Proposed by Cllr McCord

- To set the Special Responsibility Allowance for all committee chairs to be equal at 1 x Basic Allowance - £13,750
- To set the Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee at 20% of the Chair (as per the IRP) - £2,750
- To have a SRA for the Lead Member for Children's Services at a multiple of BA x 1.66 - £22,825
- To set the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the largest opposition group - £11,000
- To set the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the second largest opposition group - £5,500 (half of largest opposition group)
- To set the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the third largest opposition group - £2,750 (half of second largest opposition group)
- To set the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Leader of the fourth largest opposition group - £1,375 (half of third largest opposition group)
- To note that the opposition party leaders allowances remain within the £20,625 total amount as set recommended by the IRP and the total cost of the scheme is no greater than that recommended by the IRP



Amendment - Item 12 Proposed by Cllr McCord

| Position | Allowance |
|---|---|
| Chair of Strategic Planning Committee | 1 x BA - £13,750 |
| Chair of Area Planning Committee | 1 x BA - £13,750 |
| Chair of Licensing | 1 x BA - £13,750 |
| Chair of Audit Committee | 1 x BA - £13,750 |
| Chair of Overview and Scrutiny | 1 x BA - £13,750 |
| Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny | £2,750 at 20% of chair of Overview and Scrutiny |
| Chair of Standards Committee | 1 x BA - £13,750 |
| Lead Member for Children's Services SRA | £22,825 set at 1.66 x Basic Allowance |
| Leader of the minority Groups | |
| Largest minority party (Leader of the opposition) | £11,000 |
| 2nd largest minority party (half of largest) | £5,500 |
| 3rd largest minority party (half of 2nd largest) | £2,750 |
| 4th largest minority party (half 3rd largest) | £1,375 |

