

County Council
Thursday 15th February 2024



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DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

To: Members of Devon County Council

County Hall
Exeter
EX2 4QD

7 February 2024

Your attendance is requested at the Meeting of the Devon County Council to be held at County Hall, Exeter on Thursday, 15th February, 2024 at 2.15 pm.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'D' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Chief Executive

AGENDA

- (a) Order Paper (Pages 1 - 8)



Thursday 15 February 2024
ORDER PAPER

AGENDA ITEM 8 – FRAMEWORK DECISION
REVENUE BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY &
CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Cllr Hart to move the Cabinet Minute (475) (1-20) from 9 February 2024 relating to the adoption of the Revenue Budget 2024/2025, Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 & Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2028/29.

Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr Twiss (Con)
Cllr Leaver (LD)
Cllr Wrigley (LD)
Cllr Biederman (Ind)
Cllr Hodgson (Grn)
Cllr Hall (Con)
Cllr Connett (LD)

Councillor Leaver to **MOVE** and Councillor Wrigley to **SECOND** that Cabinet Minute (475 1-20 (9 February 2024) (Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2027/28 and Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2028/29) be amended by the addition of the following and all necessary changes be made to the detailed budgets:

- 1. Additional Funding of £2 million on improving road safety made up of £1.5million on mending potholes and improving road drainage, and an additional £500,000 on repainting white lines on the roads.*
- 2. Restore £60,000 to Libraries Unlimited to enable them to increase community library provision.*

(Total Cost £2.06 million)

We will pay for these priorities by:

- 1. Reducing the budget for travel by council staff and councillors by £10,000, taking advantage of remote working and virtual meetings.*
- 2. Reduce spend on hiring outside rooms / venues for DCC activity and DCC related activity by £100,000 by reviewing current arrangements and seeking more cost effective options.*

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3. *Reducing the corporate communications, media and press element of the Citizens Engagement budget by an additional £300,000 by improved and more efficient working.*
4. *Spending £50,000 less on subscriptions by reviewing value for money of all subscriptions with a clear focus on benefits to Devon's taxpayers.*
5. *Reviewing the council's essential car user scheme and making savings of £220,000.*
6. *Reducing expenditure on Agency and Temporary staff by £700,000 recognising the challenges faced by Children's Social Care and their strategy to increasingly move away from using agency staff.*
7. *Reviewing the council's mobile phone policies and making savings of £20,000.*
8. *A saving of £600,000 to be achieved by improved efficiency across all Corporate Services for example Business Services and Support, Customer Relations, Finance Services, Facilities Management and IT Services, through an increased use of web based services and other technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.*
9. *To raise £60,000 from the Locality Grants budget, by reducing the increase proposed by the current administration, resulting in councillors having an allocation of £7,000 each instead of £8,000 in 2024/25. This money to be directed to improve community library provision.*

Councillor Biederman to **MOVE** and Councillor Hodgson to **SECOND** that Cabinet Minute (475 1-20 (9 February 2024) (Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 - 2027/28 and Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2028/29) be amended by the addition of the following and all necessary changes be made to the detailed budgets:

The Independent & Green Group Welcomes and supports:

1. The overall 6.3% increase in the budget, specifically the 10.4% in Children and Young People's Futures and 6% in Integrated Adult Social Care, while recognising this does not meet the Inflationary, National Living Wage & Demand pressures facing us and does not help with the years of cuts by Government to our core funding.

We Support

(a) The £2.3 million increase in the internal and external fostering budget, and the increased number of in-house foster carers by 30, and £3.2 million investment in the development of three in [1] house children's homes reducing the reliance on out of county placements and independent fostering agencies, something we have pushed for, for many years.

(b) The increase of 525 places in Devon's Special School estate.

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(c) The increase in Member Locality Budgets to £8,000 per Member, as local Members can help support their communities.

(d) Welcome the extra £1.152m in cyclic Maintenance of the Highway. We have pushed for this in many years.

(e) We reluctantly support the 4.99% Council Tax increase, recognising that failing to do so, will put at further risk, the services that our communities rely on, particularly our most vulnerable residents.

We will support the Cabinets Budget, if the following amendments are accepted, as we believe if we are again asking the public to pay more, that they see an improvement or at least services maintained.

A – The £175,000 reduction proposed to Devon library Services are reversed, recognising the positive impact Libraries have on our communities.

B – An increase of £250,000 to the Public Rights of Way & Cycle Network budget from £750,000 to £1,000,000.

C – Increase PROW Wardens by 4, to cover the 3000 miles of footpaths, split 2 extra for North & South Team. Total Cost including on costs £180,000

D – An increase of £100,000 to £250,000 LTP Budget for 20mph Zones supported by Parish Councils.

E – The Administration commits to look at the management Structures across the council, to seek to reduce the number of Managers we currently have.

F – Commit to write to each Devon Conservative MP, outlining the severe underfunding Devon County Council gets for School Funding & High Needs Block funding, asking them why they voted for a settlement that continues to disadvantage Devon's Children. We are 114 out of 151 in the funding Table.

This has led to the severe situation the Council finds itself in, being the Authority with the biggest SEND accumulated overspend on its books forecast to be £163M by the end of the year.

*Devon's Children are underfunded by £213 each per Year.
We have 94,302 Children, meaning Devon is shortchanged by £20,086,326 against the average.*

High Needs Block Funding we are underfunded against the national average by £96.06 per head.

We have 9,401 children in this bracket, meaning we are down by £868,478.46 a year against the average.

Devon is underfunded for Schools & High Needs block by almost £21 million a year, meaning our children cannot get the support others get. This of course leads to children falling behind and needing expensive interventions later on. This has gone on for years, so we say Devon is not overspent, it is underfunded. We are now in this budget, asked to put £5m from capital projects to the safety valve for

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our negotiations with government to pay back the overspend, it will of course involve committing to not supporting so many children in the same way going forward. Which capital budgets will this come from, most probably our crumbling road network.

G – Public Health, we are worse off than School Funding, being 139 out of 150 that receive Public Health Funding. We receive £37 per head of population, whereas the national average is £70-£80. Its hard to get the exact figure but let's assume we have 800,000 residents and if its £70 that's a staggering £26.4 million we don't get against the average! Just imagine what we could do for our communities, if we just got the average. So, we write to the Government & all Devon MP's asking why they see it fit that Devon is so badly funded.

We believe F & G proves that we are not being levelled up but levelled down by this Government and its an insult to the people of Devon, when we hear Devon MPs and Government ministers talking about how they are levelling up. The fact is, they are using money taken from us originally. £150m in Core Grant a year gone since 2010, meaning we now spend officer time and money on bidding for pots of money.

Our Budget Amendments A-D have been checked by the Finance Team and confirmed as Legal & Appropriate for consideration by Council.

They total £705,000 which will be paid for by:

A – The Citizen Engagement Budget, formerly known as Communications, is reduced by a further £500,000 from £1,061,000 to £561,000 as we do not believe we need 28 staff effectively acting as spin doctors for the administration. We have 60 councillors that regularly engage with our communities.

B - £205,000 is taken out of the Executive, Legal & Democratic Services, reducing it to £8,186,000 from £8,391,000. This could be done by reducing the number of staff from 111 – 106.

A & B are moved into the relevant budget lines.

AGENDA ITEM 9– FRAMEWORK DECISION PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/2025

Councillor Hart to move the Minute of the Appointments, Remuneration and Chief Officer Conduct Committee relating to the adoption of the Pay Policy Statement 2024/2025 (15th January 2024) (Minute 85).

Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr McInnes (Con)

AGENDA ITEM 10– FRAMEWORK DECISION - CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

Councillor Hart to move the Minute of the Cabinet (13 December 2023 – Minute 433) Committee relating to the adoption of the proposed Corporate Performance Management Framework and proposal for a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.

The Leader will **MOVE** that resolution (b) be amended as follows.

(b) that the proposal for a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge in **December** ~~June~~ 2024 be endorsed.

Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr Saywell (Con)

AGENDA ITEM 12 – MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

PART A

Schedule of Motions/Amendments to Minutes containing a resolution (and relating thereto) to be debated.

NIL

PART B

Schedule of Starred Minutes containing a resolution against which amendments have been submitted.

NIL

PART C

Minutes called for debate

NIL

AGENDA ITEM 13 - 20 – NOTICES OF MOTION

Cabinet Recommendations

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(13) Councillor Hart will formally move the adoption of Cabinet Minute 458(a) (10 January 2024) in relation to Councillor Dewhirsts Notice of Motion on Gaza.

*Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr McInnes (Con)
Cllr Dewhirst (LD)*

(14) Councillor Hart will formally move the adoption of Cabinet Minute 458(b) (10 January 2024) in relation to Councillor Adams Notice of Motion on Box Shifting

*Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr McInnes (Con)
Cllr Adams (Lab)*

(15) Councillor Hart will formally move the adoption of Cabinet Minute 458(c) (10 January 2024) in relation to Councillor Baileys Notice of Motion on Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) findings on Special Educational Needs and the Role of Scrutiny.

*Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr McInnes (Con)*

(16) Councillor Hart will formally move the adoption of Cabinet Minute 458(d) (10 January 2024) in relation to Councillor Atkinsons Notice of Motion on Hospicecare.

*Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr McInnes (Con)*

(17) Councillor Hart will formally move the adoption of Cabinet Minute 458(e) (10 January 2024) in relation to Councillor Atkinsons Notice of Motion on Gaza.

*Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr McInnes (Con)*

(18) Councillor Hart will formally move the adoption of Cabinet Minute 458(f) (10 January 2024) in relation to Councillor Atkinsons Notice of Motion on Austerity and Cuts to LG.

*Speakers: Cllr Hart (Con)
Cllr McInnes (Con)*

(19) Councillor Hart will formally move the adoption of Cabinet Minute 458(g) (10 January 2024) in relation to Councillor Leavers Notice of Motion on Devon Residents Deserve Clean Rivers and Beaches.

Councillor Leaver will move the following amendment (new words in re and a strikethrough for removed text);

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(a) note that the ongoing problem of poor water quality in Devon impacts on our local communities, economies and environment across the county; and

(b) **The Council condemns repeated sewage outfalls across the county and urges Key Stakeholders** ~~all those with a specific role~~, including South West Water, the Environment Agency, Ofwat and central government, to pursue relevant action to adequately address this problem. **This includes encouraging all Devon's MPs to work in a positive way to address the issue of pollution in rivers and beaches.**

(c) **The Council resolves to write a joint letter from DCC Group Leaders to Devon MPs and South West Water to prioritise action to improve the situation over the increases in payments of dividends to shareholders and Directors' salaries.**

*Speakers: Cllr McInnes (Con)
Cllr Hughes (Con)
Cllr Leaver (LD)*

New Notices of Motion

(20) Councillor Biederman will move the Notice of Motion on 'Flexibility and Action against holiday firms exploiting families, those working in schools and the holiday industry as at item 20 on the agenda.

*Speakers: Cllr Biederman (Ind)
Cllr Leaver (LD)*

