

Scrutiny Budget recommendations

1. Scrutiny Committees' note the Government's provisional financial settlement and the spending targets determined by the Cabinet, expressing concern nonetheless at the continuing financial pressure faced by local authorities and the potential consequences on the ability of the Council to do what matters for the citizens of Devon;
2. Scrutiny welcomes the County Councils successful application to be one of the ten 2018/19 business rate retention pilots, with the estimated benefit to the wider Devon area of just under £17 millions and asks that Cabinet continues to press for clarity over funding arrangements for local government for 2019/20 and beyond;
3. Scrutiny welcomes the endeavours undertaken by this Council to achieve fairer funding for children in schools across Devon but ask Cabinet to continue to pursue this matter until funding for education is equitable with other similar local authorities;
4. Ask that the Cabinet continue to monitor the sufficiency and financing of appropriate placements for children in care both locally and nationally, particularly those meeting the needs of children with complex needs;
5. Request that the Cabinet maintain the commitment of the Council that adverse impacts for foster carers arising from the re-structure of fostering fees, will be eliminated in the short term thus minimising any risk of de-stabilising children currently in placement. To ensure that current placements will not be adversely affected. Furthermore, that the changes, which are currently being negotiated with foster carers, once finalised through Cabinet, will be designed and introduced in ways that minimise any potential impact;
6. That the Cabinet continue to press Government through Devon MPs for a fair funding allocation for Devon for Public Health in recognition of the importance of the prevention agenda;
7. That Scrutiny draws to Cabinet and Devon's MPs attention grave concerns about the impact of the cuts to the public health budget in particular:
 - (i) the potential loss of 30 FTE health visitors from public health nursing;
 - (ii) the anticipated significant impact to young people's mental health from the £223,000 reductions in spend on Public Mental Health at a time when anxiety and depression is increasing;
8. That the Cabinet be requested to support an allocation of money from the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership to continue to support Public Mental Health;
9. That Scrutiny welcomes the additional monies of £10.148 millions from the Better Care Fund but records concerns about the longevity of this funding beyond 2020;

10. Ask Cabinet to identify additional resource in the Highways and Traffic Management budget to prioritise preventative work on drainage to include gully emptying and cleaning; as well as ditching
11. That Cabinet consider the balance of approach taken on preventative highways maintenance acknowledging the impact this has on the repair of defects in lower category rural and urban estate roads and that funding is made available to achieve this request.
12. Re-iterate the need for Cabinet to satisfy itself that all risk and impact assessments continue to be updated and are compiled with the evidence gathered during this budget preparation exercise and any subsequent engagement processes to support the proposed way forward; and
13. That the Cabinet satisfy itself that the budgets prepared on the basis of its approved targets are indeed sufficient to meet the demands placed on those services and that the apportionment of resources between the various services is appropriate and proportionate.