

Scrutiny Budget recommendations 2021/22

Welcomes and supports:

1. The endeavours taken in effective running and financial planning by this Council and the subsequent 6.6% increase in budget, specifically the 8.3% increase in budget for Adult Care and Health and 7.8% increase for Children's Services.
2. The focus on planning transitions for children and young people with disabilities to adult services and the capital spend to create 300 additional places for children with Special Educational Needs.
3. The lobbying efforts of this Council to receive fair funding for Devon Schools.

Record concern:

4. Cabinet to satisfy itself that based on the uncertainties, both short and long term, around the covid-19 pandemic that sufficient funds are in place to ameliorate any shortfall in funding or necessary increase in spend, with particular comments on:
 - a) The anticipated increase in mental health provision required because of the pandemic
 - b) The future of Public transport, particularly buses, with dwindling numbers due to the pandemic.
5. That the budget savings planned are achievable particularly those projected from services for adults with a disability and those from highways winter operations and the reduction in capital funding from central government.
6. This Council's ability to recruit to social care vacancies in light of Brexit and covid-19. Scrutiny calls for national recognition for the valued role domiciliary care workers provide to society. Calls for the Proud to Care recruitment campaign to continue.

Cabinet be asked to:

7. Support Health Scrutiny to carry out its statutory function of public accountability by detailing how NHS funds are included within the DCC budget for future budget consideration. This is necessary in moving to Integrated Care Systems with a joint approach for service planning.

8. Continue to maintain support for prevention and innovation work across the Council including proactive exploration of opportunities to increase funding through specific grants. Specifically, but not limited to:
 - a) Public health initiatives
 - b) Climate change and active travel
 - c) Connectivity of public transport
 - d) digitisation of communities –with possible opportunities in shared prosperity and levelling up funding.
9. Specify that all new contracts for social care providers uphold the Council's commitment for national living wage at £10 per hour as a minimum for everyone employed in care.
10. Continue to reduce the vacancy rate for public health nursing with a view to achieve a full complement of staff.
11. Explore future opportunities for in-house provision for residential children's care.
12. Consider rurality when funding school transport.
13. Find savings by more streetlights having part night lighting and use these savings to invest in road safety defects.
14. To prioritise further investment road maintenance if there is the opportunity to do so.
15. Consider greater work on modelling determinants of demand in future years to support more accurate predictions in areas of spend; whilst acknowledging difficulties associated with demand led services. To support this endeavour call for Cabinet to clearly demonstrate impact and value for money for residents in services with high spend.
16. Lobby Government to:
 - a) commit to multi-year funding settlements and simpler grant-based initiatives to support financial certainty and longer-term planning.
 - b) Provide additional support for public health nursing
 - c) Address the SEND high needs funding block deficit and amend the funding allocation to reflect the number of EHCPs not solely on deprivation.
 - d) Deliver on promises made about the need for social care reform as soon as possible.
 - e) Adequately fund climate change to enable local authorities to deliver substantial measures mitigate climate change and ecological emergency.