

## Scrutiny Budget Recommendations 2022/23 (CSO/22/5)

### Welcomes and supports:

1. The 10.8% net increase in the budget for Children's Services and the 10.5% increase in the budget for the Adult Care and Health Services recognising the huge demand on the system, and the imperative to invest in workforce given the issues with staff recruitment.
2. The negotiations with the NHS to enable one-year additional funding, possibly £10million, to maintain services and support a reduction in unnecessary hospitalisations and achieve timely transitions out of hospital.
3. The ongoing discussions with the Department for Education on the Safety Valve Programme to support the reduction of the deficit in the SEND High Needs Block, and welcomes the agreement anticipated by the end of March 2022.
4. Additional monies in this budget, specifically:
  - 4.1 Capital investments to provide an additional 525 special school places by 2024;
  - 4.2 The additional investment in violence prevention combined with the significant investment in developing the Council's new duties around supporting survivors of domestic abuse'
5. Scrutiny welcomes service productivity specifically:
  - The addition of 200,000 books in Devon's libraries.
  - An additional 500 courses delivered online by Learn Devon.

### Record concern:

6. Scrutiny places on record dissatisfaction with the 1-year financial settlement for the Council against demand-led pressures and the resulting challenges in developing strategy without financial certainty and also the unknown grant settlement for Public Health.
7. Cabinet to satisfy itself about the realism of achieving almost £39 million in savings and offset income considering the increase in cost of living, inflation, increases in demand and the cost of the post-covid recovery. Scrutiny is particularly concerned about the potential for cost pressures to lead to budget overspend and the resulting impact upon vulnerable people in Devon as well as the maintenance of roads and safety and highlights the need for the preservation of preventative and routine services.
8. Scrutiny places on record concern with the anticipated additional pressures on the Adult Care and Health Service including:
  - The impact of the cessation of grants including the 'Discharge to Assess' funding from the end of March 2022.
  - Changes to the Liberty Protection Safeguards, replacing the Deprivation of Liberty Scheme, and the current lack of clarity from Government about how this will be funded.

- The increase in future demand coming through from Children's Services.
- 9. The future of public transport and the viability of routes because of reduced patronage and supports the Cabinet Member in her lobbying endeavours for additional funding for this area. Scrutiny would also like to see additional investment in active travel.
- 10. Record concern about how the impact assessment does not consider safety and access for disabled people.

**Cabinet be asked to:**

- 11. Rethink the £329,000 reduction in community grant schemes as well as the £2,000 reduction in each Councillor locality budget in order to support partnership working with the communities of Devon.
- 12. Consider the in-year ability to provide additional support to highways maintenance and patching if target savings are on track.
- 13. Continue to maintain support for workforce recruitment and retention, and specifically to;
  - 13.1 Improve housing availability for key staff through Team Devon and engaging with District Council's local plan process.
  - 13.2 promote 'Proud to Care' opportunities with the individuals who have been recruited by the County Council to support the track and trace programme on a temporary basis.
- 14. Continue to lobby for fair funding for Devon children to support them to reach their potential including the large shortfall in Capital investment to maintain the school estate by creating and maintaining quality learning environments.
- 15. Ensure adequate funding is in place to adequately support the significant numbers of vulnerable children who have experienced domestic violence.
- 16. Support joined up working across Council departments for the improvement of youth Services.
- 17. Include means-testing in the proposed charge for disabled parking bays to ensure low-income disabled people are not disadvantaged.
- 18. Explore other authorities' approach to an in-house school transport service with a view to achieving the budget savings attributed to this service.
- 19. Work to minimise the anticipated increase of 4,750 tonnes of municipal waste being disposed of in landfill in 2022/23