

Scrutiny Budget recommendations 2020/21

Scrutiny Committees' have reviewed 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; specifically, Scrutiny:

Welcome and supports

1. Thanks the finance team for prudent financial management and the composition of the budget book.
2. Record thanks to the endeavours of the officers of the Council across all service areas.
3. The increases to budgets considering the demand led services and additional pressures on the budget. However, scrutiny does recognise the pressures resulting from the national living wage and inflation.

Children's	8.5%
Adults	10%
Communities, Public Health, Environment and prosperity	2.4%
Corporate services	7.1%
Highways infrastructure, development and waste	5.1%

Record Concern

4. That the budgets prepared based on Cabinet's approved targets are sufficient to meet the demands placed on those services and that the apportionment of resources between the various services is appropriate and proportionate. Most notably:
 - the realism of achieving the £1.1million savings in children's services notwithstanding the edge of care work coming to fruition.
 - that based on the provisional nature of the Public Health settlement that sufficient funds are in place to ameliorate any shortfall in funding
 - and that the budget savings across the Health and Adult Care budget are achievable.
5. Ask for greater clarity over the breakdown of figures in the budget papers, for example opportunities from the Better Care Fund showing the support given to the third sector.

Cabinet be asked to

6. Consider additional funds for the following:
 - I) Investment in the children's services workforce designed to curb the spend in agency cost
 - II) further investment in early help for SEND
 - III) The Prevention work as part of the STP made possible through significant partnership arrangements with and between Districts, the third and voluntary sector and the NHS including financial support to support and develop local community groups and charities.

7. Ask Central Government to overhaul the budget setting process for Local Authorities including:
 - I) Move to four-year finance settlements to support financial certainty and longer-term planning
 - II) Giving clarity over settlement figures as soon as possible and in future as far in advance as possible to enable effective service planning.
8. Lobby Central Government and Public Health England to increase the Public Health Grant, recognising the insufficient funding for prevention work for the determinants of adverse childhood trauma and mental health and reiterating that investing in prevention will reduce spend by the NHS, DCC and Statutory Services upon treatment.
9. In the event there is additional funding in the Public Health Grant Settlement this be dedicated to prevention work with substance misuse, particularly alcohol and mental health.
10. Write to Secretary of State for Education requesting fair funding for schools; drawing attention to:
 - I. the insufficiency of High Needs Block Funding to meet the needs of children with SEND in Devon. The Committee requests that the funding formula is no longer based on outdated census data applied to meet current needs, and also takes account of complete pay and pension funding for non-teaching school staff.
 - II. Funding for small rural schools which are particularly prevalent in Devon.
11. To hold Central Government to account on promises and make it aware of the impact of policies namely:
 - I) Adequately resourcing additional responsibilities that may arise from the Prevention White Paper.
 - II) Recording concern about recruitment in Health and Adult Care following from the proposed points-based immigration system and from leaving the EU,
 - III) Call for the Swift publication of the Green Paper on Adult Social Care
12. Use the conclusions from the climate change citizens assembly, when available, to lobby central government to provide more significant funds available for local green measures possibly including public transport and cycling infrastructure.