

CCC BUDGET AMENDMENT 2017-18

POLITICAL PARTY/PARTIES	Conservative
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TOTAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRECEPT INCREASE	+2%
TOTAL GENERAL COUNCIL TAX INCREASE	+0%

TOTAL ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT	£2,780,000
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CHANGES TO FUNDING: (compared to S151 Officer proposed budget)		
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ASC PRECEPT		
GENERAL COUNCIL TAX		
MRP FUNDING	+£2,780,000	
RESERVES		
OTHER		
TOTAL CHANGES TO FUNDING		+£2,780,000

Proposed Conservative Amendments to Cambridgeshire County Council's 2017/18 Cross-Party Budget

The pace of change at Cambridgeshire County Council has been too slow over the last four years; the most significant contributory factor is that there has been no overall control by a single party for that time. Despite the Conservatives being the largest political group, we are dependent on others for support. Conservatives are committed to change and have welcomed and embraced new ways of thinking and working, whilst other political parties have sometimes been inclined to be protectionist around existing practices and staffing. Conservatives have wholeheartedly embraced the creation of the Transformation Fund, which has seen the planning of changes to working practices, some large, some small, some new, many that are tried and tested in other authorities. Conservatives know that services can and must be better run and have contributed to and supported robust business cases that offer improvements to services and financial savings. We are confident that under a Conservative administration the Transformation Fund can deliver more and that the pace of change can be faster.

We have listened to the residents of Cambridgeshire and understand and acknowledge the issues the public want us to act on and are therefore proposing a number of changes to the 2017/18 budget:

- Provide the resource to work up a number of highways improvement schemes to deal with traffic pinch points around the county
- Improve the quality of our roads and footpaths
- Invest in mental health services

Further:

- Through the City Deal, we anticipate ending the £1 Park & Ride charge at no cost to the County Council
- We have already secured an increase in our commitment to disadvantaged children with an accelerated programme of work to improve early years literacy

In particular, we are aware that the public needs to travel throughout the county to get to work and access facilities and services, without encountering those congestion points that, although relatively small in nature, can add time and frustration to what are necessary journeys. The Conservatives, nationally and locally, led on and delivered the creation of the Combined Authority bringing £770m to the area through the devolution deal. Additionally we negotiated with Government to deliver the £500m in the Greater Cambridge City Deal. Alongside these pots of funding there are regular funds available from other streams such as the Local Enterprise Partnership. We therefore propose to work up a series of congestion beating

highways initiatives to get schemes “oven ready” that can be used to access some £50m of road improvements to improve the journeys of our commuting workforce.

Conservatives propose a balanced approach to the County Council’s element of Council Tax bills for next year.

Conservatives believe that there is general support from Cambridgeshire residents to apply the 2% Adult Social Care precept which is built into the cross-party proposed budget, and which will be ring-fenced and used to support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. Conservatives have also listened to residents that are struggling to make ends meet and for whom rising bills are a constant and very real concern, many of whom live in our more rural areas; we therefore propose no increase in general Council Tax.

Proposals from other parties at General Purposes Committee to fund additional spending plans ranged from raising Council Tax bills by a total of 4.99%, to not raising Council Tax at all but funding spending plans from reserves with no proposal on how this would be sustained year on year.

Conservatives believe that the £932k funding gap in the 2017/18 budget, (which it is proposed to balance by using MRP funding which otherwise would have been transferred to the Transformation Fund), should be met by permanent savings in the 2018/19 budget to prevent an ongoing drain on the Transformation Fund. We believe that it is possible to do this through accelerated transformation of the way the Council is run. Other parties have so far made no proposals or commitment to prevent the ongoing yearly requirement of £932k a year draining out of the Transformation Fund budget as a result of the funding gap in the 2017/18 budget.

Conservatives believe that it is possible and necessary to accelerate the changes to the way the Council is run and will seek to expedite this process in the next administration.

Conservatives agree with a cross-party proposal for a 2% Adult Social Care precept in 2017/18, but believe this needs to be balanced by no increase in Council Tax. Conservatives propose to:

- Making £70k revenue available to fund the borrowing associated with making highways schemes “oven ready” in order to access £50m of funding for investing in congesting busting projects that will help alleviate those delays in our work and social journeys that have such a negative effect on those that need to commute to work and travel around the county.
- Increase the funding for pothole repairs, services and cracks by an extra £2.15m. This is an increase of approximately 50%, enabling us to repair an extra 67,500 pot holes a year.

- Increase Gulley Clearance, grass cutting and visibility splays by £200k. This will increase cuts from two to three a year, helping prevent some of the costly emergency response work, addressing concerns raised by residents.
- Invest a further £300k in sealing and improving pavements.
- Invest an additional £60k in mental health in order to implement the public mental health strategy commitments as previously approved by the Health Committee. This includes supporting schools to deal with bullying, supporting employers to help staff at risk of mental health decline, and funding a debt advice pilot for people at risk of mental health.
- And we have now secured agreement for our earlier amendment proposal at General Purposes committee to fund the £120k early years literacy project. This will pay for literacy projects to be delivered in Wisbech, Huntingdon, North Cambridge and St Neots. They have a proven impact - the initial project in Wisbech worked with 200 families and 450 children and contributed to a 26% increase in children achieving the early years' standard over a two year period.

The total additional cost to the revenue budget of the Conservative proposals outlined in this paper is an extra £2.78m beyond the current Committee based cross-party budget and section 151 officer proposals. Although we could raise Council Tax to cover this, we do not believe that this increase has to be met by the local taxpayer. Instead we propose that for the financial year 2017/18 the cost of these investments be funded from the MRP funding. However, if the control of the Council is returned to the Conservatives at the elections in May 2017, we believe this cost can be met by accelerated transformation proposals in 2018/19 and therefore this would be a one-off draw on MRP funding. We also believe that the Transformation Fund should be repaid not just for our proposals but also the continuing subsidy of spending from the transformation fund currently proposed to be used to balance the budget for 2017/18, through further transformation proposals in 2020/21. Our proposals therefore will have no net impact on the transformation fund over the five year plan.

Conservatives have listened to residents and believe that these proposals, on top of the cross-party plans worked up through the Committee process, provide a balanced and proportionate approach to delivering what the people of Cambridgeshire want and need.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The figures below are the **differences** to the S151 Officer proposed budget and are in absolute figures.

Increases in expenditure and corresponding increases in funding are shown as positive figures. Expenditure

	2017-18 £000	2018-19 £000	2019-20 £000	2020-21 £000	2021-22 £000
Pothole repairs and carriageway cracks sealing	2,150	2,150	2,150	2,150	2,150
Gully clearance, grass cutting and visibility splay grass cutting	200	200	200	200	200
Sealing cracks in pavements and general footway improvements	300	300	300	300	300
Mental Health	60	60	60	60	60
Debt charges resulting from getting capital schemes 'oven ready'	70	70	70	70	70
Transformation project savings	-	-3,712	-3,712	-7,424	-3,712
TOTAL*	2,780	-932	-932	-4,644	-932

Funding

	2017-18 £000	2018-19 £000	2019-20 £000	2020-21 £000	2021-22 £000
Use of MRP funding	2,780	-	-	-	-
Reduction in use of MRP funding (from 2017-18 gap) ¹	-	-932	-932	-932	-932
Repayment of MRP funding ¹	-	-	-	-3,712	-
TOTAL*	2,780	-932	-932	-4,644	-932

*Totals must be equal as all budget amendments must balance.

¹These are contributions to the Transformation Fund.

The figure under 'Repayment of MRP funding' for 2020-21 (£3,712k) is repayment of the £2,780k MRP funding proposed to be used in 2017-18 in this amendment, **plus** repayment of the £932k MRP funding proposed to be used in 2017-18 in the officer proposed budget.

Net Impact on transformation fund

As above, negative figures are contributions to the transformation fund.

	2017-18 £000	2018-19 £000	2019-20 £000	2020-21 £000	2021-22 £000
Current Proposal to Council	932	932	932	932	932
Current Proposal Cumulative Total	932	1,864	2,796	3,728	4,660
Conservative Amendments ²	3,712	0	0	-3,712	0
Conservative Cumulative Total	3,712	3,712	3712	0	0

²The figure for 2017-18 assumes the use of MRP funding to close the gap in the officer proposed budget (£932k) and to fund the additional investments within the Conservative amendment (£2,780k).