

<b>CCC BUDGET AMENDMENT 2017-18</b>
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POLITICAL PARTY/PARTIES	<b>Liberal Democrats</b>
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TOTAL ADULT SOCIAL CARE PRECEPT INCREASE	<b>+2%</b>
TOTAL GENERAL COUNCIL TAX INCREASE	<b>+1.99%</b>

TOTAL ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT	<b>+£5,115,000</b>
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<b>CHANGES TO FUNDING: (compared to S151 Officer proposed budget)</b>		
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ASC PRECEPT		
GENERAL COUNCIL TAX	<b>+£5,115,000</b>	
MRP FUNDING		
RESERVES		
OTHER		
TOTAL CHANGES TO FUNDING		<b>+£5,115,000</b>

## **Liberal Democrat's budget amendments, February 2017**

### **Preamble**

The Liberal Democrat group believes that public services in Cambridgeshire are under unparalleled pressure across all sectors of service, as they are in the rest of the country. It recognises that strenuous efforts have been made by officers to provide services more cost-effectively. It is clear that:

- a. Demographic changes are increasing the demand for social care services for children and adults.
- b. Our transport network is hugely over-stretched.
- c. Central government grant has been significantly reduced over the last five years and will disappear entirely within two years

The government has allowed local councils a small level of discretion in setting council tax levels and the Liberal Democrats believe that this flexibility must be used to protect services for those who currently need them and to reduce the likelihood of even greater costs in the future.

We have only drawn up proposals for one year, as with the election of a Mayor for Cambridgeshire, and the new role of the Combined Authority it is very difficult to predict what the County Council will need to take sole responsibility for and what elements will be able to be shared with new partners.

### **Specific proposals**

#### **1. Children's services: additional spending**

**£1.795m**

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|---|-------|
| a. Increase services to supporting young mothers and their babies                     | £190k |
| b. maintain special needs support for schools   | £270k |
| c. maintain central support for the Cambridgeshire Race and Diversity Service (CREDS) | £625k |
| d. support the work of locality teams   | £310k |
| e. reducing children's centre closures  | £400k |

#### **2. Services for Vulnerable**

**Adults:**

**£1.905m**

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|---|-------|
| a. To allow for a higher percentage increase for care providers | £692k |
| b. jointly commission a specific home care service              | £700k |
| c. increase the hourly rate for home care                       | £513k |

#### **3. Roads and transport**

**£1.415 m**

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|--|-------|
| a. free parking at Park and Ride sites for Cambridge | £800k |
| b. subsidise bus routes and community transport      | £315k |
| c. better maintenance of verges and footpaths        | £100k |

d. additional maintenance for the County's roads, pavements and cycle ways	£200k
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**Total extra spending**  
**£5.115m**

**Yield from increasing council tax by 2%**  
**£5.115m**

The rationale for these proposals is explained in detail below:

- 1a. The quality of care for young mothers and their babies is critical for their long-term well-being. The first three years of life are crucially important and international longitudinal studies demonstrate that it is a false economy to fail the youngest children, particularly those most vulnerable. 20% of Cambridgeshire 2 year olds are not receiving vital health checks.
- 1b. The proposals which have been presented at County Council committees remove specialist teaching support currently available to schools in Cambridgeshire. This support is particularly important for those schools in deprived areas who are struggling to meet required standards. The budget proposals suggest that schools would be able to buy back these support services from the Council. However the schools who need services the most are the least likely to be able to afford to buy in support services. We would maintain the current budget, as we believe ensuring that every child in Cambridgeshire is offered a high quality education ought to be a key aim of the County Council.
- 1c. The current proposals withdraw all central funding from the CREDS service. This service provides translation support to schools and other educational settings who are teaching children with diverse ethnic backgrounds, and who have English as an additional language. They also provide specialist support to gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, where the children tend to have prolonged absences from school. To remove the funding from this service, and require schools themselves pay for this support would again put undue financial pressure on those schools which can least afford it.
- 1d. Locality teams work with children in the most difficult and disadvantaged families. The council's children's change programme is recommending reducing the number of teams working with struggling families from 14 to 7. We believe the cuts being made to the service are too deep and too rapid. They will be counter-productive because they will lead to higher costs later on a child's life. This additional money would halve the level of cuts required in the service, and would be focussed on increasing the number of front-line staff.

- 1e. The current proposals include £1 million of cuts to the children's centres budget. Children's centres offer support to young mums and toddlers, and are crucial in making sure mothers are supported, and children are ready for school at age five. This level of cuts risks undoing years of invaluable work in supporting young families. Children's centres have also often become community hubs, and places where other activities can take place and families be supported by a range of services such as health visitors. The level of cuts proposed is too deep and will fall hardest on the most vulnerable communities, including the rurally isolated. Our proposal mitigates some of the damage that might be caused.
- 2a. There is widespread public concern about bed delays, ambulance attendance times and Accident and Emergency waiting times. The NHS is under unprecedented pressure. We are deeply concerned that current proposals from the Conservative group will add to these pressures by restricting the money available to those providing care outside hospital. Care providers already report problems in recruiting and retaining staff in Cambridgeshire, and the County Council is struggling to find places for some elderly patients when they leave hospital. The fact that these elderly patients have to stay in hospital longer because care at home is not available leads to cancelled operations, and has led to patients being turned away at A and E. The proposals for below inflation levels of cost increase are both unwise and unrealistic.
- 2b. The joint commissioning of a specific home care service geared up to achieve rapid hospital discharge and provide a range of health and social care tasks would allow patients to be discharged from hospital as soon as they are ready, and confident that the care they need will be available immediately.
- 2c. Increasing the hourly rate for home care workers would enable CCC to attract and retain the required work-force at a time when demand is growing and the available work force is shrinking.
- 3a. Cambridgeshire is the fastest growing economic area in the UK, and while we are proud of this success, the impact on the County transport infrastructure is of ever-increasing congestion. Free parking at the Park and Ride sites around Cambridge (which we suggest could be joint funded with Cambridge City Council) would ensure that those who need to come into the city to work have a fair alternative, and also discourage commuters from parking in residential streets.
- 3b. The historic Cambridgeshire Conservative decision in 2010 to eliminate all bus subsidies has weakened the rural bus network and necessitated a continual struggle for lifeline transport. Loss of bus services falls most heavily on the young and old, and those who are not able to drive for health or economic reasons. Liberal Democrats have long argued that maintaining bus services is critical in enabling rural mobility, and that this can require an element of subsidy. Simultaneously, financial support is essential for community transport organisations, who provide door-to-door lifeline transport and access where no other options exist.

- 3c. This money will be available both for cutting verges more frequently to allow motorists clearer views on corners, thereby increasing road safety, but equally importantly for cutting back of hedgerows along rural cycle paths, pavements and footpaths. Growth of hedges makes many pavements and cycle paths in rural areas almost unusable in the summer months, and can be dangerous, particularly if the pavement has been designated as a safe route to school.
- 3d. The County's roads, pavements and cycle ways are deteriorating at an ever-increasing rate. The number of potholes and uneven pavement surfaces has made many elderly people worried about going out in the dark, for fear of falling. It is important for health that people continue to lead active lifestyles for as long as possible. Making sure the pavements are safe, as well as filling pot-holes in the roads, should be a higher priority for road maintenance.

### **Increasing council tax**

We fully recognise that nobody wants to pay more tax than necessary. Although council tax is broadly progressive i.e. those in the highest value houses pay most in cash terms, we also acknowledge that, as a proportion of disposable income, those in the lowest council tax bands are badly affected.

We feel that this proposed increase is justified in that most of the proposals outlined above specifically target the extra resources at those in greatest need. The extra 2% (i.e. on top of 2% for adult social care) will cost the average household 42p per week. We consider that to be a reasonable compromise in difficult times and we will be making that case during the coming weeks in the hope of persuading other groups on the County Council to back our budget proposals on February 14th.

## **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**

	<b>2017-18 £000</b>	<b>2018-19 £000</b>	<b>2019-20 £000</b>	<b>2020-21 £000</b>	<b>2021-22 £000</b>
<i>Children's services</i>					
Increase services to support young mothers and their babies	190	190	190	190	190
Maintain special needs support for schools	270	270	270	270	270
Maintain central support for Cambridgeshire Race and Diversity Service (CREDS)	625	625	625	625	625
Support the work of locality teams	310	310	310	310	310
Reducing children's centre closures	400	400	400	400	400
<i>Vulnerable Adults</i>					
To allow for a higher percentage increase for care providers	692	692	692	692	692
Jointly commission a specific home care service	700	700	700	700	700
Increase the hourly rate for home care	513	513	513	513	513
<i>Roads and transport</i>					
Free parking at Park & Ride sites for Cambridge	800	800	800	800	800
Subsidise bus routes and community transport	315	315	315	315	315
Better maintenance of verges and footpaths	100	100	100	100	100
Additional maintenance for roads, pavements and cycle ways	200	200	200	200	200
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>5,115</b>	<b>5,115</b>	<b>5,115</b>	<b>5,115</b>	<b>5,115</b>

### Funding

	<b>2017-18 £000</b>	<b>2018-19 £000</b>	<b>2019-20 £000</b>	<b>2020-21 £000</b>	<b>2021-22 £000</b>
Raise General Council Tax increase from 0% to 1.99%	5,115	5,115	5,115	5,115	5,115
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>5,115</b>	<b>5,115</b>	<b>5,115</b>	<b>5,115</b>	<b>5,115</b>

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