

Agenda Item No. 7 – Council’s Business Plan and Budget Proposals 2021-22 to 2025-26 – Conservative Amendment

Proposals:

The Conservatives have worked hard throughout the year to show leadership, and engendered cross-party co-operation to deliver a forward looking, ambitious and balanced budget. Most of the budget proposals, we have been able to constructively deliver in this way.

This Conservative Budget Amendment, continues to deliver on the Conservative manifesto promises, residents’ aspirations and prudent financial management, which we committed to, when residents put the Conservatives back in control of the council in 2017.

Our Conservative proposals are based on the fundamentals below.

- 1) To deliver our services effectively, efficiently and with good outcomes**
- 2) To deliver enhanced services or additional outcomes that our residents have made plain they require from us**
- 3) To balance the above two demands with a commitment to do everything possible to minimise the financial burden on our residents**

Delivering our services effectively, efficiently and with good outcomes

Our benchmarking from external independent sources, shows that we are a low-cost authority with good outcomes. In terms of efficiency our total net service expenditure is £155 a head less than the county average. Cambridgeshire County Council delivers its services per capita at approximately £100million less a year than the County average. Additionally, we continue to campaign for fairer funding, because quite staggeringly; if Cambridgeshire residents received the same core funding allocation as London residents, this Council would receive an additional £132m per year.

Delivering enhanced services or additional outcomes that our residents have made plain they require from us

Some previous examples, when our residents said spend more on highways, we listened: In 2018/2019 we added £18m to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), increasing the revenue budget, and made a further investment of £6.366m in 2020/2021. When our residents asked us to accelerate our plans to achieve Carbon Net Zero, we allocated £16m on making buildings more efficient, and enabling the changeover to electric vehicles.

To be clear, the Conservatives in just two budget areas, proposed in the last two years, allocated and voted through £34m to improve our roads, verges, pavements and towards our environment strategy, all of which the major opposition parties have argued and voted against.

Today, having listened to the concerns of our residents, we propose to invest a further

£29.7 million in Cambridgeshire Highways over the MTFS 2021 - 2026

- **£20 million extra for footpath maintenance**
- **£2.73 million extra for flood attenuation and improving our biodiversity.**
- **£6.97 million in improvements to the B1050**

Absolute investment levels: year-by-year (capital and revenue)

2021-26 Conservative Budget Proposals	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Total
Footpaths and Pavements	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000	20,000
B1050 Improvements	170	6,800				6,970
Flood Attenuation and Biodiversity	1,090	410	410	410	410	2,730
Total Additional Investment	5,260	11,210	4,410	4,410	4,410	29,700

Balancing the above two demands with a commitment to do everything possible to minimise the financial burden on our residents

Now more than ever we need to concentrate on keeping the burden of Tax as low as possible for our residents. The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted on our residents and their families, our way of life and the local as well as national economy. To automatically inflict the maximum possible increase, of 4.99% is unthinkable to us as Conservatives. We have therefore made a carefully calculated decision to balance the budget gap for next year of £9,612,000 by:

- **Halting all further top-ups to the Transformation Fund from the Councils MRP policy immediately, releasing £4.115m revenue in 2021/22.**
- **Redeploying Council Taxpayers' money from the Transformation Fund for one year, so that our residents don't have to pay £3.767m extra in Council Tax in 2021/22**

The Conservative group, having delivered on our promises, our priorities and exhausted all other prudent financial measures, also accept as a last resort, we must recommend to Council that it:

- **Balances the remaining budget gap by setting the Adult Social Care Precept at 1.00% and Council Tax at 1.99%**

CONSERVATIVE AMENDMENT

Proposed by Councillor Count, Seconded by Councillor Hickford

Delete recommendations 2a, 2b and 2c:

~~2. Receives the following recommendations to Council:~~

- ~~a) That approval is given to the Service/Directorate budget allocations as set out in each Service/Directorate table in Section 3 of the Business Plan.~~
- ~~b) That consideration is given to a total county budget requirement and precept level~~
- ~~c) That consideration is given to a Council Tax increase for each Band of property, based on the number of “Band D” equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the District Councils as set out in Section 2, Table 6.4 of the Business Plan.~~

Replace recommendations 2a, 2b and 2c as follows:

2a Approve the Service/Directorate budget allocations as set out in each Service/Directorate table in Section 3 of the Business Plan, to be balanced and amended with the following adjustments:

<i>Revised budget gap as proposed £000</i>		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
		9,612	17,637	12,884	13,638	10,611
Permanent change by year £000		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
b	Footpaths and pavements – revenue investment	-	+1,000	+1,000	+1,000	+1,000
c	Footpaths – revenue impact of capital investment (if 100% CCC funded)	+36	+161	+117	+73	+30
d	B1050 – design costs	+170	-170	-	-	-
e	B1050 – revenue impact of capital investment (if 100% CCC funded) <i>[based on an indicative estimate prior to design works]</i>		+61	+228	-3	-3
f	Flood attenuation and biodiversity– verges, gullies, grips: permanent investment; developing local flood resilience, targeted alleviation works, supporting community alerts and improving information access.	+1,090	-680	-	-	-
Revised revenue budget gap after investments		10,908	18,009	14,229	14,708	11,638
<i>Financing adjustments</i>						
g	Application of remaining MRP policy review benefit	-4,115	+590	+565	+542	+529

h	Revise Council Tax policy to +1.99% general & +1.00 % ASC precept	-3,026	-191	-107	-109	-137
i	Application of transformation funding to address remaining gap	-3,767	+3,767	-	-	-
Revised budget gap after financing adjustments		0	22,175	14,687	15,141	12,030

- 2j Approve a total county budget requirement in respect of general expenses applicable to the whole County area of £888,457,000 as set out in Section 2 Table 6.1 of the Business Plan, including a levy of £9,246,000 payable to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the delivery of Transport Services and a levy of £433,000 payable to the Environment Agency for flood and coastal schemes.**
- 2k Approve a recommended County Precept for Council Tax from District Councils of £323,810,193.33, as set out in Section 2, Table 6.3 of the Business Plan (to be received in ten equal instalments in accordance with the fall-back provisions of the Local Authorities (Funds) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 1995).**
- 2l Approve a Council Tax for each Band of property, based on the number of “Band D” equivalent properties notified to the County Council by the District Councils (231,331.0), as set out in Section 2, Table 6.4 of the Business Plan reflecting a 1% ASC precept increase and a 1.99% increase in the Basic Council Tax precept:**

Band	Ratio	Amount (£)
A	6/9	933.18
B	7/9	1,088.71
C	8/9	1,244.24
D	9/9	1,399.77
E	11/9	1,710.83
F	13/9	2,021.89
G	15/9	2,332.95
H	18/9	2,799.54

- 3 Increase the current capital programme by adding the following to recommendation 3:**
- Invest a total of £10m in Footpaths and Pavements between 2021-22 and 2024-25 to maintain a combined annual capital and revenue investment of £4m**
 - Invest £6.8m in improvements to the B1050**