

## Town and Parish Council Feedback on the 2025-30 Business Plan and Budget

Meeting held 12 December 2024 at 6.30pm

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources introduced the County Council's proposed business plan and budget for 2025-26, highlighting the start of the consultation period and the importance of feedback from various stakeholders. He detailed the significant financial pressures faced by the council, including a need to find £34.2 million in savings and new income to balance the budget for 2025-26. The Executive Director explained the proposal for a 4.99% increase in council tax, noting that this is within the government's cap and necessary to address financial pressures. Also outlined was the council's change strategy, which includes five key programs aimed at transforming the council's operations over the next five years, focusing on digital transformation, asset management, and community-based services. Within the proposals there was also key investment areas, including £21 million for highways, £6 million for the Household Support Fund, and £20 million for the real living wage in adult social care. To balance the budget though various savings initiatives were needed, such as re-baselining forecasts for older people services, generating income from energy projects, and rationalising the office estate.

The Executive Director emphasised the importance of the consultation process, encouraging participants to provide feedback through the available online links and surveys. The Service Director: Communities, Libraries and Skills also attended the meeting and shared these links with attendees.

An attendee asked if the proposed council tax increase was supported in the 2025-30 Business Plan and Budget Engagement Survey, and the Executive Director confirmed that it was, with 52% of respondents supporting the increase. No issues were identified for Strategy, Resources and Performance Committee to consider when it meets on 28 January 2025.