

I read say this not for the benefit of my colleagues in the chamber but those hard-pressed people watching this meeting.

Dorset Council is requesting an increase in our Council tax of 2.99% or £1.02p per week for a Band D property.

I am sure that like me a great many people find this extremely disappointing and wished it did not happen. Many people will be juggling increased household expenses, domestic fuel increases combined with the price of food all a serious cause for concern.

But Dorset Council also has a number of serious financial challenges to face and with competing demands and in several areas cannot and should not avoid these costs. Some of you may have seen the very helpful pod casts created by Dorset Council to help residents understand the need for this increase. But if not..... here at the main points

By the way a Band D property in Dorset the proposed council tax is £1,832.67 for a band D property which is made up of £1629.63 Core and £203.04 Adult Social Care precept.

The amounts for specific areas have been rounded for the comms messages so the infographics are showing:

Waste Disposal - £160 - 9%
Adult Social Care - £712 - 40%
Children in Care - £302 - 17%

You also have Public and School Transport and SEN Transport - £142 - 8%, Highways and Streetlighting £71 - 4%,
Education and Learning - £52 - 3%.

There are a lot of other small percentages of other services, and they are also accounting techy things such as capital finance (which is a provision for repaying external borrowing on our assets) - £88 - 5%.

For 2022/23 the Adults and Housing Directorate have had an increase of 10% of their budget which is an increase of £13m, Place have had an increase of 9% of their budget which is £6.8m, and Children's have had an increase of their budgets of 4% which is an additional £2.7m

Dorset Council has higher costs and lower funding from Government than many other Councils, for example we have 2300 miles of roads to maintain. As Councillors we are all very aware of the poor deal Dorset gets from Central Government, across the board, in Dorset Council, Dorset Fire and Rescue and Dorset Police.

Dorset Council has to run a balanced budget, or to put it another way cannot run at a loss, Hence this very regrettable request to the members of our County.

Thank you to all those members of the finance team who have worked hard to prepare this budget.

I will with regret be supporting this budget, let's hope that we can get a better and fairer deal for Dorset next year.

Borrowing question

The level of borrowing for Dorset Council causes me some concern. **P123 of report**

The total external debt for 2024/25 is showing as £442 million with a liability benchmark of £337 million, a difference of £85 million, an increase over this end of march figures of £149 million

Is this sustainable?