

Appendix 6

Response to Scrutiny Recommendations

At their meetings, the People and Health Scrutiny Committee (16 January 2025) and Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee (17 January 2024) reviewed the draft proposals for the 2025/26 revenue budget and the assumptions used in developing them and an overview of the proposed savings and efficiencies to be made during the course of the year.

The committees raised a series of issues for Cabinet to consider prior to finalising the budget. The table below summarises the issues raised and provides a response to the consideration given.

Matters raised by the People and Health Scrutiny Committee	Response
Appendix 1d	
<p>When the 2024/25 budget was agreed by full council in February 2024 a decision was taken that 40% of the additional income from the council tax on second homes in Dorset is allocated to the Housing budget annually. (further details here)</p> <p>The People and Health Scrutiny Committee requested evidence to demonstrate how this was being achieved.</p>	<p>When setting the 2025/26 budget the Cabinet considered how to maximise the impact of further investment into Housing.</p> <p>The budget presented to the Cabinet meeting on 28 January 2025 and proposed to on to Full Council meeting on 11 February 2025 contain the following investments into supporting housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £1.5m of funding to support Housing transformation resource £1.6m Housing Capital Project Fund £0.75m Capital Funding for Annual Developments (housing) £0.1m of revenue funding to support capital projects <p>An updated housing strategy is scheduled to be presented to scrutiny.</p>
<p>The committee asked Cabinet to review the description for the saving 'review funding source prevention contract'. There was an option to reduce the contracts from their current level or to use the Better Care Fund. The description of this saving should be updated to include the option of using the Better Care Fund.</p>	<p>The narrative describing this saving now includes reference to external funding source. BCF has not been specifically named so as not to limit the scope to only one funding source.</p>

<p>The committee raised the importance of demonstrating the impact of early intervention against critical need. This should be continued to be developed through Adult Social Care transformation.</p>	<p>Early intervention remains a central theme as part of Adult Social Care transformation.</p>
<p>The committee raised concern about the risk caused by the employers National Insurance rise.</p>	<p>The report presented to scrutiny identifies a £1.5m for Dorset Council staff due to the unfunded changes to National Insurance Contributions.</p> <p>Furthermore this increase puts further pressure on commissioning budgets where some suppliers will be seeking further uplifts to prevent business failure.</p> <p>The report presented to scrutiny confirmed there is an allocation as part of the contingency.</p>
<p>The committee raised the importance of support services being able to provide an enabling role to front-facing services to deliver their work and targets.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>Appendix 1g</p>	
<p>The committee asked that Cabinet was provided with clarification around the proposed saving of £34k relating to youth services (page 75 of the report).</p>	<p>In response to feedback the proposals which were consulted on have been removed.</p>
<p>The committee recognised that the High needs block overspend was an issue for many councils across the Country but requested further information about the financial risks and implications for Dorset Council of a continued overspend.</p> <p>The committee asked for continued focus and oversight over the High Needs Block and to continue strengthening work with partners to address the issues causing overspend.</p>	<p>Cabinet recognises this as the most immediate & significant financial risk to Dorset Council and this is highlighted in the report several times.</p> <p>A webinar will be arranged to brief all members on the national and local position.</p>
<p>The committee asked that Cabinet recognise the impact of the £7m saving caused by early help and prevention in</p>	<p>Budget proposals have been developed and iterated over many months with close work with members and officers.</p>

<p>Children’s Services, and to give consideration to how further savings could be made and see the benefits of early help and prevention continue.</p>	<p>Careful consideration has been given to the impact of any changes as part of the 2025/26 budget.</p> <p>Cabinet support the invest to save model and in addition to the base budget for Childrens the report also confirms the continuation of the Families First for Children Pathfinder which is centres around early help and prevention and continues the development of Dorset Councils children in care model.</p>
<p>The committee recognised the challenging nature and volatility of funding provided to the council by the government.</p>	<p>The report sets out the risk associated with volatility and concerns for the uncertainty around future funding for 2026/27 and beyond.</p>
<p>Matters raised by the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee</p>	<p>Response</p>
<p>Appendix 1d</p>	
<p>When the 2024/25 budget was agreed by full council in February 2024 a decision was taken that 40% of the additional income from the council tax on second homes in Dorset is allocated to the Housing budget annually. (further details here)</p> <p>The Place and Resource Scrutiny committee requested evidence to demonstrate how this was being achieved.</p>	<p>This point was also raised by People and Health Committee and an answer is available earlier within this appendix.</p>
<p>Appendix 1e</p>	
<p>No recommendations</p>	
<p>Appendix 1f</p>	
<p>Recommended that when setting the car park charges for 25/26 further consideration is given to the impact of overnight charging on residents and</p>	<p>The impact of fees and charges on residents, local business and nighttime economy have been considered.</p> <p>Cabinet are continue to offer and promote permits which can be used by</p>

<p>local businesses, and especially the night time economy.</p>	<p>residents to make parking more affordable for regular users.</p> <p>When setting the budget Cabinet consider the need to generate income to fund the maintaining of the highway network, much of which covers rural roads.</p> <p>The Governments discontinuation of funds such as the rural services deliver grant meaning Dorset Council miss out on £3.2m of grant funding.</p>
<p>Recommended that when considering the introduction of charging for non dorset residents for the use of household recycling centres, that the impact for close residents needs consideration.</p>	<p>Dorset Council Tax payers should not be subsidising the cost of services which are consumed by residents from other local authorities.</p> <p>Introducing a charge will allow non-Dorset residents to consider whether they wish to pay a fee for the convenience of using a particular site, or wish to make arrangements to visit a site which they can use for free.</p>
<p>Recommend that appropriate budget is identified to fund the additional resources required to prepare the Local plan.</p>	<p>The budget implications of preparing a Local Plan is currently funded from a reserve. Proposals are being developed to identify the ongoing resources and funding requirement to meet the updated Government requirements of preparing a local plan.</p> <p>Expressions of interest have also been submitted to attract external funding.</p>
<p>Requested that the local transport plan budget line be identified explicitly within the budget papers</p>	<p>The 2025/26 budget gross revenue spend of over £1bn.</p> <p>Identifying the local transport plan as a separate line within this paper will be considered as part of future budget papers.</p>
<p>Appendix 1h</p>	

No recommendations	
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