

**Budget Consultation Feedback**

This appendix sets out the feedback from a range of budget consultation events occurring during January 2019. These include:

- Reports and presentations to Scrutiny Committees;
- Public Consultation on budget proposals via the Council's website; and
- Meeting with businesses, trade unions and other public bodies.

These comments will be considered by the Executive in recommending the budget for approval by County Council.

An update on the budget consultation feedback will be tabled / reported verbally at the meeting for feedback received after the deadline for this report.

**Budget Comments from Scrutiny Committees****Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – 16 January 2019**

The Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee agreed to support the budget proposals for Adult Care and Community Wellbeing for the 2019/20 year.

The Committee focused on the funding for future years, in effect from 2020/21 onwards, as the Better Care Fund was due to cease in its current form at the end of 2019/20. Since 2016/17, the Council had received the following Better Care Fund support:

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Better Care Fund (BCF)	16,825,000	15,900,000	16,186,200	16,461,365
Improved BCF	-	2,105,730	14,249,038	25,770,902
Supplementary Improved BCF	-	15,265,596	9,608,578	4,110,611
2019/20 Winter Pressures	-	-	-	3,368,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,825,000</b>	<b>33,271,326</b>	<b>40,043,816</b>	<b>49,710,879</b>

It was confirmed to the Committee that there was an expected overall Council shortfall of funding of £46 million in 2020/21 and £55 million in 2021/22, based on existing assumptions. *(Please refer to note <sup>1</sup> below)* Such shortfalls would clearly lead to a focus on the Council's discretionary services, although certain discretionary services could reduce demand on mandatory services.

<sup>1</sup> After the Committee's meeting, advice was received that work had begun to look at ways to meet the funding shortfall and it was expected that the Council's overall shortfall of £18.6 million initially identified for 2019/20 would reduce. The projected £55 million shortfall in 2021/22 was a worst case scenario, with the shortfall likely to be closer to £40 million for this year.

There was an expectation that an equivalent to the Better Care Fund would be put in place for the year 2020/21 and future years, but this has not been confirmed. The arrangements for the future funding of adult social care are dependent on the publication by the Government of its *Green Paper on Care and Support for Older People* and the subsequent implementation of any proposals. As a complication, on 7 January 2019 the NHS published its *Long Term Plan*, in which there is an emphasis on community services, integration between health and adult social care, and prevention.

The Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee plans to include the *Green Paper* and the *NHS Long Term Plan* in its future work programme, at the appropriate times. The Committee is also offering to support the Executive in any review of services or service changes within its remit in the coming year, as a result of national requirements, and any consequential impacts on the County Council's budget.

#### Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 18 January 2019

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed to support the proposed council tax increase of 4.95% for the 2019/20 year. The Committee also agreed to support the proposed budget for 2019/20 for Children's Services, including the rationale for the cost pressures identified in two of the commissioning strategy areas:

- Learn and Achieve Commissioning Strategy (£306,000); and
- Children are Safe and Healthy Commissioning Strategy (£1.194 million)

The Committee also referred to impact of the Government's comprehensive spending review, and the Council's *Fairer Funding* campaign, the outcomes of which are currently unknown. Given these uncertainties, the Committee's support for the council tax increase, which was above the rate of inflation, was difficult, but the pressures on the Council, including Children's Services, were genuine. It was also acknowledged that the County Council would continue to rely on reserves for the coming years.

#### Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee – 15 January 2019

The Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee considered budget implications for the commissioning strategies 'Protecting & Sustaining the Environment', 'Sustaining and Growing Business and the Economy' and 'Economic Infrastructure and Regeneration'.

The Committee endorsed the overall proposed revenue and capital budget proposals for 2019/20 and the proposed 4.95% increase in Council Tax.

The Committee highlighted support for the proposed (£2.000m) capital investment for the development of Business Units to safeguard employment, and endorsed officers working up detailed proposals to measure demand and supply across the County.

The Committee highlighted three key areas of future concern within this area to the Executive.

- The need for the County Council to take a leadership role in ensuring the vitality and viability of local High Streets, due to the rapid changes within this area and the possible impact on the wider economy,
- The potential impact on grants and funding delays from exiting the European Union and;

- The importance of the skills agenda in getting more adults into learning that will enhance careers as an important way to increase productivity.

#### Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee – 21 January 2019

The Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee considered budget implications for the commissioning strategy 'Sustaining and Developing Prosperity Through Infrastructure'.

The Committee highlighted support for returning to two full cycles for weed spraying (£0.150m); reinstating three rounds of safety grass cutting (£0.300m) and returning to a full cycle of gully cleansing (£0.370m) as positive developments given the input of the Committee in these areas. The Committee also supported the funding for greater availability of additional Mobile Maintenance Teams (MMT's) to manage the peak in demand for pothole repairs over the autumn and winter period (£0.220m).

The Committee endorsed the proposed 2019/20 revenue and capital budget proposals for Highways and Transport; and the proposed 4.95% increase in Council Tax given the identified on-going budget pressures. The Committee also endorsed the proposed capital programme, as well as major schemes which stretch into future years.

#### Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee – 22 January 2019

The Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee considered the budget implications for the commissioning strategies Community Resilience & Assets, Protecting the Public and Sustaining & Heritage Services. The Committee endorsed the proposed 2019/20 revenue and capital budget and supported the funding of the known cost pressures identified within the proposals.

The Committee welcomed the proposals to re-instate a budget to support the core services of the Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) (£0.278m), after the service received support by use of reserves during the last two years.

The Committee acknowledged the limited options available to continue to effectively fund services going forward. The Committee supported the proposed 4.95% increase in Council Tax and welcomed comments from officers that Lincolnshire would remain in the lowest quartile for Council Tax in the Country.

#### Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 31 January 2019

To follow.

#### **Public Consultation – Comments received from Members of the Public**

There has been one response from a member of the public, who generally commented that the level of service received from the Council did not reflect the amount of council tax paid. Specific examples of services which he felt ought to be improved were pothole repairs and the timing of road closures. A further comment was made about the increasing cost of road schemes and he suggested that the Council should work with the City Council to regenerate lower Lincoln High Street. He also questioned whether it would be more prudent to make savings sooner so as not to drain reserves.

**Consultation Meeting with External Stakeholders Comments**

A Budget Consultation meeting was held with external stakeholders on 25 January 2019.

Further detail to follow.

**Attendees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>