

**BUDGET CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

This Appendix provides details of the budget consultation events which have taken place in January 2021. At the time that this appendix was prepared, details of the feedback received before 20 January are included below.

Further Scrutiny Committee meetings are due to take place after 20 January 2021, and the public consultation via the Council website is due to close on 25 January. A meeting with businesses, trade unions and other public bodies took place on 28 January 2020. An update on the budget consultation feedback from these meetings and the public consultation will be tabled at the meeting on 4 February.

Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The following statements have been received from Scrutiny Committee meetings which have taken place during January 2021:

Comments from the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee – 12 January 2021

On 12 January 2021, the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee supported the budget proposals for the Environment and Economy services for 2021/22.

The following points were highlighted in relation to the Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2021/22:

- The Committee was pleased to see that the Government was still providing the Council with grants during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It was recognised that costs had increased due to the pandemic and would have to increase to reflect the rise in the National Living Wage from April 2021.
- In relation to the separated paper and card recycling scheme, this was now being rolled out across the county. Based on the returns from the trial, it was expected that it would eventually generate an income to the Council after taking into account the costs to the Council. The separated collections would therefore have both environmental and financial benefits in the long term.

Comments from the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee – 13 January 2021

On 13 January 2021, the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee supported the budget proposals for Adult Care and Community Wellbeing services for 2021/22.

The following points were highlighted on the Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2021/22:

- The Committee was pleased to see that Adult Care and Community Wellbeing had performed well in managing and delivering an anticipated balanced budget for 2020/21, especially during such a challenging year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee also acknowledged the work of all those in Adults Care and Community Wellbeing involved in delivering balanced budgets for the last nine years, up to and including 31 March 2021.
- It was expected that 2021/22 would be similarly challenging, but the proposed balanced budget for 2021/22 was welcomed.
- Information on the social care precept, including proposals for its use in 2021/22, would be included in the report due to be submitted to the Executive on 2 February 2021.

#### Comments from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 15 January 2021

On 15 January 2021, the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee supported the budget proposals for Children's Services for 2021/22.

The following points were highlighted in relation to the Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2021/22:

- The Committee thanked officers for their excellent work on the proposals, and recognised the significant cost pressures facing Children's Services. Officers had responded to the challenges and identified savings as well.
- The Committee congratulated officers on the CIPFA Looked After Children benchmarking for Local Authority participants which showed Lincolnshire's average looked after child placement costs for 2019 to be £41,555 per annum, compared to the average of other Local Authorities of £53,287. This highlighted great value for money while still providing excellent services.
- The Committee was pleased to see that the Council had secured additional Government grant funding for the Building Communities of Specialist Provision Strategy, and Council funding solutions to meet the revised overall programme costs of £86.794m, to cover the increasing costs of the programme and to invest in Lincolnshire's children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Concerns were raised about the increasing Home to School Transport costs and the impact that the Government's aspirations for green transport would have on this budget. The budget was still continuing to increase despite a lot of effort put in to manage the costs. Where possible, Home to School Transport utilises public transport services; however there were a large number of routes where this was not possible due to the rurality and size of Lincolnshire, and the lack of large bus operators with only Stagecoach

operating in Lincolnshire. An in depth review by external consultants from Edge Consultancy was being undertaken to identify whether any further possible efficiencies could be made. This review would consider all different options, including the Council delivering some of the Home to School Transport or paying parents mileage costs, as possible options. The Committee supported the in depth review and it was suggested that the report from the review be considered at an informal briefing session for the Committee to discuss the outcomes in detail.

Further Scrutiny Committees are due to meet after 20 January:

- Highways and Transport Scrutiny Committee – 25 January 2021
- Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2021, and
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 28 January 2021.

#### Meeting with businesses, trade unions and other public bodies

Budget proposals will be presented to representatives from business, trade unions and other public bodies on 28 January 2021. Feedback from the meeting will be reported in due course.

#### Public Consultation via the Council website

Following consideration of the budget proposals 2020/21 by the Executive on 5 January 2021, a public consultation was published on the Council website, and is due to close on 22 January 2021. Any comments received will be reported in due course.

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