

Budget Amendments from the Progressive Group 2024

Proposer: Councillor Diana Moore

Seconded: Councillor Michael Mitchell

We note the budget put forward. The Progressive Group of councillors proposes the following amendments to the medium term financial strategy:

Amendment 1: Capital Budget: investment in improving recycling and food waste service.

To address the £6 million funding gap of the £8 million required for the materials reclamation facility in the MTFS and establish a doorstep glass recycling service:

- a) Sale of the Civic Centre - a minimum of £2.5m capital income;
- b) Reallocation of the Civic Centre HFX Door Access Requirement (£100,000) to this purpose;
- c) Fund the remainder by using unallocated CIL and undertaking a review of the CIL budget of projects which have underspent or have allocated resources that have not yet been used, in order to prioritise investment in the MRF and doorstep glass recycling collections.

Amendment 2: Service Improvements over medium term financial plan.

Improve efficiencies and cooperation between Councils: Negotiate a move of back office functions to Devon County Council offices or, failing that, another property within ECC portfolio. Operating costs assumed to be similar in terms of overheads and a reduction in office space requirement. Move to be funded by £100,000 of the additional revenue grant received from Government and funds from the sale of the property as required.

Investment in customer services: To move ECC customer service centre to an empty shop in the Guildhall Shopping Centre to provide an accessible and welcoming public face and regenerate an empty shop in the Guildhall with an anchor tenant: the Council. The set up and the overhead overhead operating costs to be funded by the unearmarked surplus from the Guildhall Shopping Centre.

To undertake a **review of Leisure Services** with a view to being on a stable financial basis over the life of the MTFS with the aim of becoming cost neutral.

Amendment 3. Service Improvements for 2024-25 budget

Allotment Service: £40,000

- Reverse the 2024/25 in year allotment fee increase of £20,450 to spread this over three years so that the fees cover service costs over a three year period. Assuming 5% inflation each year thereafter, this is an addition to the MTFS of £15,030 to 26/27.
- To invest £24,969 in allotment improvements in discussion with allotment holders.
- Both of these points above to be funded by £40,000 from the additional revenue grant received from Government.
- To reduce administration costs by enabling a direct debit service for the payment of fees.

- Introduce a deposit scheme equivalent to three months rent (except for those in receipt of any benefits) to be forfeited should a tenant be evicted due to non-cultivation. Forfeited deposits to be reinvested in allotment improvements.
- Investigate the development of new allotment sites on HRA land for council housing tenants using funds from the uncommitted HRA working balance.

Investment in Street Cleansing: £67,770

Increase all day car parking by £2, the price of a single bus fare, in zones 1 & 2 and in Zone 3 by £3 (taking an all day ticket to £8) to generate £67,770 to mitigate the cuts and invest into the street cleansing services.

Flagship Parks and Green Spaces: Invest £43,575

Extend the charging periods on a Thursday evening for the John Lewis, Guildhall, Mary Arches to align with the charges for those car parks on every other night of the week. To generate £25,605. To reallocate budget line for a chatbot (£17,970). All to be invested in the City Centre parks and green spaces infrastructure and planting.

Ensuring a well run Council: Appointment of a part-time (.5) Scrutiny Officer (Grade H, £22,920) to improve the scrutiny arrangements of the Executive and across all Council services. To be funded by a 50% contribution from each of the HRA and general fund unallocated surplus for each fund.