

**Oxfordshire County Council  
16 February 2016  
The Green Budget Amendment 2016/17**

**The Dented Shield**

Our objective is to generate the money to preserve front line services and put back the cuts that will be false economies or will have a severe and dramatic direct effect on the most vulnerable people in the County.

It is our intention through a series of reductions in councillor's allowances, senior officers pay and changes to the management and governance of the County plus a modest increase in the council tax of 3.01%, to generate enough income to refocus the burden of the cuts away from those who will suffer the most. However, given the scale of the cuts that are being introduced, £69 million over a four year period, we cannot hope to restore all the cuts that are being made and where these have been designated as efficiency savings rather than cuts or where there is some hope of an alternative funder we have kept the original officer recommendations.

Our budget sees a return to the level of Councillor's Allowances that existed in 2014 cutting out the increase that was introduced in 2015. It was not the time for such an increase when services are being so severely stretched. Our budget also sees a return to the senior officers pay scale of 2014 that was deemed adequate then before a pay hike which was unjustified in a local Government system that will have shrunk by one third over a 5 year period. Cutting back the number of politicians in the Cabinet that run the County by 3 also reflects the fact of diminished responsibilities. These moves alone will generate over £1m of savings over 4 years that most will agree are justified.

The Green budget also sees much more joint working with other councils and more enterprising use of Council facilities and expertise.

Another way of trying to generate income to fund services is to increase car park charges in car parks and controlled parking zones. The Tories running the County are willing to totally withdraw the small subsidy that underpins buses operating in various rural villages and to let the service collapse leaving people isolated. The Green budget links the small increase in car park charges to fund the rural bus services and the Dial a Ride service for the disabled. The two are linked in the Green budget so the money from one supports the other.

Increasing the council tax by 7%, 3.01% more than the figure in the proposed budget is not an easy thing to suggest, wages in Oxfordshire only rising by 2 or 3% this year on average. However many Oxfordshire people know that the Government have cut the revenue support grant to the County by many, many millions and the only realistic way of trying to hold together the essential services that everybody needs is to increase the rate slightly above the level of the rise in local earnings. Even so, the average council tax payer will still only be paying an extra 72p per week a sum the Green Party consider can be presented to

the people of Oxfordshire with a good prospect of gaining support in a referendum. We consider that people are now aware that limited increase is justified and it is the only way if their vital services are to be preserved.

The bulk of the spending in the Green budget is focused trying to restore the massive cuts that are being focused on Adult Social Care. Over five million pounds in 2016/17 alone will be taken from the care of the elderly, the disabled, the homeless and the poor with a malicious attack on the most vulnerable. The Green budget stops the cuts to the carers, the disabled, the closure of homeless hostels and those suffering from dementia. How we treat those who cannot help themselves is a mark of how civilised a society we are and the Greens cannot turn their back and cry crocodile tears on those who suffer.

Essential to the Greens budget is providing enough to keep open ALL of the Children's Centres who do such a wonderful service to parents and children through the County. This is not simply because to destroy the service in the way suggested is unjust but like many of the cuts, is a totally false economy in that closure will destroy many families and more children will end up in care costing the County even more than the original cut. Protecting children's services is a vital part of the green budget and that is why we are suggesting that grants to Children theatres are not cut and the special schemes to help disabled children and their carers continue. Children are only young once and to deny them access to fulfilling experiences is to deprive them of a life.

We recognise that the cuts as they bite will cause distinct unforeseen emergencies in social care so we have established an emergency crisis fund of £1.5m that will be used to stop immediate traumas that will arise as the sharp reductions in all departments are implemented. Such a fund will be vital to alleviate the suffering by distinct vulnerable groups that inevitably will emerge.

The Green capital projects are not focused as with the Tories on wasting more money redesigning roundabouts and building another generation of new Park and Rides. Such things are for when the funding crisis is not so severe. The Greens want to cash in on grants that are available to insulate council buildings and saving energy via insulation schemes. They also want to move the County to provide some real progress by having European style road cycle networks that will be safe and fast for cyclists. Plus generating more parking solutions via an extra controlled parking zone.

The Green budget is design to provide for those most in need and to protect our environment. It is to protect people who need our help and the County that we love.

## **Recommendations**

**The Council is RECOMMENDED to:**

**a) (in respect of revenue) approve:**

- 1. the council tax and precept calculations for 2016/17 set out in Annex 1 and in particular:
  - i) a precept for 2016/17 of £314,749,372; and**
  - ii) a council tax for Band D equivalent properties of £1,318.73****
- 2. a budget for 2016/17 and medium term financial plan for 2017/18 – 2019/20 as amended in Green Group Annex 2;**

**b) (in respect of capital) approve:**

- 1. A Capital Programmes for 2015/16 to 2019/20 as amended in Green Group Annex 3.**

**Cllr David Williams**

**Leader of the County Green Group**

## Council Tax and Precepts 2016/17

### Council Tax Data

1. In order to set its budget for 2016/17, the council needs to calculate its council tax requirement. This is the amount that the council needs to raise from council tax to meet its expenditure after taking account of the income it will accrue from the following
  - (a) the amount to be received from specific grants.
  - (b) the amount to be received from Revenue Support Grant and the Business Rates Top Up under the Business Rates Retention Scheme.
  - (c) the amount to be received for the County Council's share of Non-Domestic Rating Income.
  - (d) any surpluses/shortfalls on the council tax collection funds for earlier years and the estimated position for the current year.
  - (e) the amount expected to be received from fees, charges and contributions.
2. In order to set its council tax for the forthcoming year, the council needs to calculate its council tax requirement and have available the council tax base, expressed in terms of Band D equivalent properties.
3. Based on the final information on funding and assuming a council tax requirement of **£314,749,373** as shown in the proposed Medium Term Financial Plan (Section 4.1) as amended by Annex 1 to this report the calculation of the Band D Council Tax for 2016/17 is as follows:

### Council Tax Calculation 2016/17

	£m
County Council net expenditure after specific grants	426.313
Less: Revenue Support Grant	-39.331
Business Rates Top Up	-37.394
Non-Domestic Rating Income	-29.886
Council Tax Collection Fund Adjustments	-7.015
Business Rates Collection Fund Adjustments	2.062
<b>Council Tax Requirement (R)</b>	<b>314.749</b>

  

Council Tax Base (assuming losses on collection) (T)	238,676
<b>Band D Council Tax (R/T)</b>	<b>£1,318.73</b>

The calculation of the council tax for the other bands is shown below in Table 1. Table 2 analyses the tax base over each district council area and allocates the estimated County Council precept to each area relative to their tax base.

**Table 1****Council Tax by Property Band for Oxfordshire County Council**

Assuming a Band D council tax of £1,318.73, the council tax for other bands is as follows:

<b>Property Band</b>	<b>Property Values</b>	<b>Band D Proportion</b>	<b>2016/17 £ p</b>
A	Up to £40,000	6/9	879.15
B	Over £40,000 and up to £52,000	7/9	1,025.68
C	Over £52,000 and up to £68,000	8/9	1,172.20
D	Over £68,000 and up to £88,000	9/9	1,318.73
E	Over £88,000 and up to £120,000	11/9	1,611.78
F	Over £120,000 and up to £160,000	13/9	1,904.83
G	Over £160,000 and up to £320,000	15/9	2,197.88
H	Over £320,000	18/9	2,637.46

**Table 2****Allocation of Precept to Districts**

The County Council precept (£314,749,373) is the sum of the council tax income required to fund the Council's budget.

District Council	Tax Base Number	Assumed Precept Due
		£
Cherwell	50,357.10	66,407,418.48
Oxford City	43,665.10	57,582,477.32
South Oxfordshire	54,965.00	72,483,994.45
Vale of White Horse	48,176.90	63,532,323.34
West Oxfordshire	41,512.03	54,743,159.32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238,676.13</b>	<b>314,749,372.91</b>

Formal approval is required under the council tax legislation for:

- The County Council's precept, allocated to district councils pro rata to their share of the council tax base for the County Council;
- The council tax figures for the County Council for a Band D equivalent property and a calculation of the equivalent council tax figure for all other bands.

The information must be given to district councils by 1 March 2016.

## Green Group Budget Amendments - Revenue

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	TOTAL
Proposed Council Tax Increase	7.00%	3.99%	3.99%	3.99%	
Band D Council Tax	£1,318.73	£1,371.35	£1,426.07	£1,482.97	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Cabinet Net Pressures (+) / Savings (-)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,374</b>	<b>6,169</b>	<b>-1,250</b>	<b>11,293</b>
<b>Corporate</b>					
Additional amount to spend from having a 7.0% Council Tax increase in 2016/17	-8,852	-546	-530	-560	-10,488
Cost of Referendum in 2016/17	638	-638			0
Extend the proposal to create a trading arm of the Council to include other services such as Legal, Finance & HR		-100	-100	-200	-400
Hire out rooms in County Hall for meetings and private functions in the evenings and weekends	-50				-50
Reduce pay budgets of Senior Staff	-100				-100
Share Senior Management Team with other Councils	-200	-200			-400
One-off saving from reduced redundancy costs		-400	400		0
Employers Parking Levy			-2,250	-2,250	-4,500
Contribution to Capital to fund a Benelux Style Cycle network (see also capital programme amendments below)			2,250	2,250	4,500
Contribution to Capital to fund Insulation Scheme	5,000	-5,000			0
<b>Children, Education &amp; Families</b>					
Do not close Children's Centres	800	6,200			7,000
Retain Early Years SEN inclusive teachers provision (CEF6)		100			100
Retain contracts for services to disabled children and families (CEF12)		250			250
<b>Social &amp; Community Services</b>					
Retain funding for the falls service (SCS5)	273				273
Retain funding for carers (SCS8)	60	100			160
Retain funding for Information and Advice (SCS9)			120		120
Retain funding for Carers Respite (SCS10)		100			100
Retain the funding for Council Health & Wellbeing Centres (SCS21b) and part of associated transport (SCS21c)		2,050			2,050
Retain funding for Intervention and Preventative Services (SCS25)				400	400
Funding for Homeless Services		500			500
Crisis Fund for Vulnerable people impacted by the cuts	1,546	-1,546			0
<b>Environment &amp; Economy</b>					
Retain funding for bus subsidies	1,220				1,220
Increase Park & Ride Charges by £2 per day	-700				-700
Subsidy for parking season ticket holders	200				200
Increase other parking charges and CPZ Permits plus new income from additional CPZ	-250				-250
Increase in the charge for Processing Licenses and Planning Applications above the proposed increase	-6				-6
Increase in the general charges	-50				-50
Biodiversity Specialist	35				35
County Cycling Planning Advisory Officer	35				35
<b>Libraries &amp; Culture</b>					
Maintain funding to the Arts			92		92
Delay the Library Savings for one year	522	-522			0
<b>Corporate Services</b>					
Reduce the number of Members on the Cabinet by three	-60				-60
Reduce the level of Members Allowances	-100				-100
Commission a feasibility study to assist NHS PFI buyouts	39				39
<b>Revised Net Pressures (+) / Savings (-)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,722</b>	<b>6,151</b>	<b>-1,610</b>	<b>11,263</b>
<b>Change to Cashflow Position</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>-18</b>	<b>-360</b>	<b>-30</b>

## Green Group Budget Amendments - Capital

<b>Amendments to the Capital Programme</b>	<b>2016/17 £000</b>	<b>2017/18 £000</b>	<b>2018/19 £000</b>	<b>2019/20 £000</b>	<b>TOTAL £000</b>
Capital receipt generated from sale of County Heritage assets	-100				<b>-100</b>
<b>Transport Programme</b>					
Benelux Style Cycle Network and Improvements to Dangerous Roads			2,250	4,500	<b>6,750</b>
Additional Controlled Parking Zone	125				<b>125</b>
A40/Collingwood Road Signalised Junction	125				<b>125</b>
<b>Environment &amp; Economy Programme</b>					
Insulation Scheme	5,000				<b>5,000</b>
<b>Total amendments to the Capital Programme</b>	<b>5,150</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,250</b>	<b>4,500</b>	<b>11,900</b>