



**County Council  
Tuesday, 19 February 2013**

**ADDITIONAL PAPERS 2**

**9. Service & Resource Planning 2013/14 - 2016/17 (Pages 1 - 26)**

The following additional papers in relation to item 9 (Service & Resource Planning 2013/14 – 2017/18) are enclosed:

- Amendments by the Liberal Democrat, Labour and Green Groups (CC9 Labour), (CC9 Lib Dem) and (CC9 Green);
- Commentary by the Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer on the Liberal Democrat Group and Green Group Amendments.

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## **COUNCIL – 19 FEBRUARY 2013**

### **BUSINESS STRATEGY AND SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2013/14 – 2016/17**

#### **Commentary on the Opposition and Green Group's amendments to the proposed budget 2013/14 – 2016/17**

**by Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer**

#### **Introduction**

1. This report needs to be read in conjunction with my budget report to Council on Business Strategy and Service & Resource Planning 2013/14 – 2016/17, setting out my commentary on the Council's financial position overall including the adequacy of reserves and balances.
2. The Opposition (the Liberal Democrat Group) and the Green Group have produced amendments to the Cabinet's budget. The commentary on those amendments is set out below. The amendment put forward by the Labour Group does not contain financial changes, and therefore does not require any commentary.

#### **Liberal Democrat Group**

#### **Overview**

3. The Liberal Democrat Group's budget proposals are based on a 1.99% council tax increase in 2013/14, 2.5% in 2014/15 with a 3.75% increase in 2015/16 and beyond. This is the same as the Cabinet's proposals.

#### **Investment Proposals and Directorate Savings**

4. The amendments to the Directorate expenditure and savings proposals are included within Annex 1 to the Liberal Democrat Group's Report. They are discussed with the Directorate proposals below.
5. Additional savings totalling £1.7m over the four year period to 2016/17 are proposed which are all subsequently allocated back to services. The savings are achieved by reducing expenditure, increasing savings and utilising reserves, whilst the additional expenditure is applied by re-profiling some savings and adding some additional expenditure.

## Directorate Proposals

### *Savings*

6. The additional savings proposed by the Liberal Democrats include reducing the inflation provision for contracts in both 2013/14 and 2014/15. The proposal is to reduce contract inflation from 3% proposed by the Cabinet to 2.75% in both 2013/14 and 2014/15. The reduction would need to be managed within the existing contract provision or absorbed elsewhere by directorates. There is some risk to this, particularly for adult social care and highways however as CPI inflation is currently 2.7% and has been for several months, the risk is tolerable. The reduction gives rise to additional funding of £0.4m in 2013/14 and a further £0.4m in 2014/15.
7. Savings are proposed which adjust the pensions budget for past service deficit. The current budget is £1.5m and it is proposed to reduce this by £0.5m from 2013/14 on an on-going basis. The impact of this reduction is uncertain but there is a risk that this could lead to an increase in the employers contribution rate due to a shortfall on the past service deficit when the next revaluation is undertaken in 2013 for implementation in 2014/15.
8. Other savings include reductions in the marketing and communications budget of £0.05m; energy savings of £0.05m; increasing the savings arising from property rationalisation from 25% to 30% generating an extra £0.075m saving and proposals to share senior management with another local authority saving £0.2m.
9. The final saving relates to using 5% of Directorate forecast reserves over 2013/14 and 2014/15. This equates to £1.8m and has not been explicitly targeted at any one reserve. Earmarked reserves are held for specific purposes, and a decision will be required on which funds will be utilised, and only then could the impact be assessed.

### *Additional Expenditure*

10. In Children, Education & Families, the Liberal Democrat group propose a phasing of the savings planned by the Cabinet relating to Children's Centres to deliver savings of £0.4m in 2014/15 rising to £0.8m in 2015/16, compared to the Cabinet's budget which implements savings of £0.8m in 2014/15. In relation to corporate parenting, it is proposed to halve the saving planned by the Cabinet of £0.36m to £0.18m, £0.09m in 2013/14 and £0.09m in 2014/15.
11. New expenditure is planned through the introduction of a travel concession scheme for 16-18 year olds from 2014/15, estimated to cost £0.35m following a feasibility study in 2013/14 with a one-off cost of £0.025m. The budget is reduced to £0.127m in 2015/16 with the expectation that funding will come from the transport companies. There is a risk that if this additional funding isn't forthcoming the scheme would have to be reduced or other savings made to fund it.

12. Additional on-going funding of £0.1m is also made available for additional youth workers from 2013/14.
13. In relation to Social & Community Services, the proposals remove the £0.2m saving relating to increased Day Centre charges in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and to halve the transport charges to Day Centres which were agreed by Cabinet in January 2013. This would create a pressure of £0.1m from 2013/14 as the savings built into the existing MTFP are from 2012/13.
14. Additional investment is also proposed in Social & Community Services to fund 5fte occupational therapists to support the elderly. One-off funding is also proposed in 2013/14 for community events to support the elderly.
15. In Environment & Economy, the Liberal Democrats propose, to maintain a broader based Area Stewardship Fund at a level of £10,000 per member on an on-going basis from 2013/14 to fund councillors' local priority schemes. This would be in addition to the Cabinet one off funding for maintenance. In addition an investment of £0.1m, increasing to £0.2m in 2015/16 is proposed to undertake annual gully clearance and flood prevention.
16. The Liberal Democrats propose to continue the Big Society fund for an additional year in 2013/14 with a one-off investment of £0.6m.
17. In the Capital Programme, funding of £0.25m is proposed for match funded cycling and pedestrian schemes. This additional commitment in the programme would be met from contingencies. Given the size of the investment, the proposed funding mechanism is considered reasonable.

## **Summary**

18. The Liberal Democrats have produced amendments to the Cabinet's proposals which are in the main funded from reducing some expenditure, along with the use of reserves. The proposed use of the efficiency reserve over the medium term is the same as the Cabinet's proposed use. This has enabled some alternative funding proposals all of which are considered deliverable.

## **Green Group**

### **Overview**

19. The Green Group's budget proposals are based on a 3.75% council tax increase in 2013/14 and increase of 3.75% beyond then, the same level as the Cabinet from 2015/16. The proposed increase of 3.75% in 2013/14 is above the level which will trigger a referendum. The cost of holding the referendum is built into the Green Group's budget proposals.

20. If an authority has set an excessive council tax increase, it must also make substitute calculations to produce a relevant basic amount of council tax which does not exceed the excessiveness principles. If a precepting authority sets an increase in excess of the principles, the substitute precept would automatically take effect in the event that voters reject the authority's increase in a referendum. The Green Group has not produced a substitute calculation. If in the event of voters rejecting the increase of 3.75% in a referendum, then the Cabinet's proposed budget would be applied as the substitute calculation.

## **Investment Proposals and Directorate Savings**

21. The amendments to the Directorate expenditure and savings proposals are included within the annex to the Green Group's Report. They are discussed with the Directorate proposals below.
22. The savings proposal is achieved through an increased level of council tax for 2013/14 and 2014/15 compared to the Cabinet. The 3.75% council tax increase for 2013/14 generates additional funding of £9.0m over the 4 years to 2016/17 but also builds in the cost of holding a referendum and potential rebilling costs of £0.5m. Compared to the Cabinet's proposed council tax increase of 1.99%, the Green Group's proposed increase would result in a Band D equivalent council tax of £1,205.27, £20.44 per year more than the Cabinet's proposal.
23. The additional income raised over the four year period is proposed to be subsequently allocated back to services. The additional expenditure is applied by reducing savings, adding additional expenditure and adjusting contributions to/from reserves.

## **Directorate Proposals**

24. In Children, Education & Families, the Green Group are proposing to remove the £0.8m saving proposed by the Cabinet in relation to Children's Centres from 2014/15. In addition, they propose new funding to increase social work support for adolescents, to support English classes for speakers of other languages and funding for short breaks to support carers of disabled children. These proposals total £0.5m from 2013/14.
25. A significant proportion of the additional expenditure relates to Adult Social Care. The proposals reduce the savings in older people, learning disabilities, physical disabilities and day centres for older people. In total reduced savings of £3.2m are proposed for 2013/14 with further reductions of £1.2m by 2016/17. With a proportion of the savings being removed in relation to the older people's pooled budget, the contingency held in Strategic Measures of £2.3m as proposed by Cabinet would be reduced to £1.3m.
26. New expenditure is planned in Adult Social Care for community development, advice and advocacy, carers' services (including short breaks), specialist and crisis care, homelessness services and funding for carers' incapacity and

increased spending on mental health. This additional investment totals £2.4m from 2013/14.

27. For Cultural Services, the Green Group propose to restore previous reductions in funding across the service totalling £0.4m.
28. In the Capital Programme, additional funding of £10m is proposed to improve dangerous roads, reduce cycling accidents and for insulation schemes aimed at reducing fuel poverty. This will be funded through prudential borrowing, with annual revenue costs of £0.4m. In terms of the impact on prudential indicators, this additional spend is considered affordable.
29. The net effect of the additional income raised and expenditure proposals result in a lower amount required to be drawn from the Efficiency Reserve to balance the budget over the medium term. By the end of 2016/17, the Efficiency Reserve would still be in surplus and have £2.1m more than that proposed by the Cabinet.

## **Summary**

30. The Green Group has produced amendments to the Cabinet's proposals which increase the level of council tax in 2013/14 above the level which will trigger a referendum. The risk to this proposal is if voters do not accept an increase in council tax of 3.75%, in which case the Cabinet's proposals would apply. A significant amount of the additional income is then put into Adult Social Care, reducing the savings required. These amendments are considered reasonable and deliverable.

## **SUE SCANE**

**Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer**

**15 February 2013**

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**COUNCIL – 19 FEBRUARY 2013  
SERVICE AND RESOURCE PLANNING – 2013/2014  
Report by the Leader of the Opposition**

**Introduction**

1. The Liberal Democrat opposition have always made it clear that the Council needs to invest in the basic frontline services that local people rely on every day, and this year is no different. Our budget concentrates on three priorities: children and young people, elderly and vulnerable people and the environment. We also have an emphasis on supporting local communities.
2. We are concerned about the impact that changes to youth services and to services for the elderly and vulnerable are having, and we have put forward some measures to ease the pain within the financial constraints that we have to accept. Part of the solution lies in helping communities to work together with the council; in some cases, this needs starter funding, but not necessarily on-going costs.
3. We set out in the Annex our proposals to amend the Cabinet's budget to invest more in these priorities, whilst making savings to the marketing and communications budget, sharing some of our management costs with other authorities and reducing the amount of inflation on contracts. We would achieve this by setting a council tax increase 1.99% in the first year, which is the level we are allowed before triggering a referendum

**Investment and saving proposals**

*Children, Education & Families*

4. Our children are our future. Every child should be given the best possible start in life. Our amendments put an additional £2.059 m into the Children, Education & Families budget. For this reason, we are proposing to phase the amount of savings on management costs to the Children's Centres of £0.400m. This will give us more time to bring about these changes, whilst assessing how this will impact on the more rural areas of the county.
5. We are pleased that the Cabinet is increasing the investment in children's social care because this is a key area where caseload management means that having experienced officers in the front line may help to alleviate problems early on. However, we are still concerned about our Corporate Parenting role, and therefore only propose taking half the savings of £0.180m to ensure that we have a more efficient, but robust service in place.
6. We consider the youth service has undergone radical changes, especially in the way the service is now run. The hubs have taken some time to get themselves up to speed with all the changes, so we believe that an extra £0.100m per year to employ outreach youth workers, will enable some

basic support for the youth service especially in the more rural areas. This will help support the services already running, especially for some of the more vulnerable young people.

7. Finally, we understand how important it is for our young people who wish to leave school at 16 to undergo training, apprenticeships and work experience, but are not able to drive to their employment or college places. We propose doing a feasibility study at a cost of £0.025m in 2013/14 followed by a pilot year of funding concessionary bus travel for these 16-18 year olds in 2014/15 at a cost of £0.325m. However, we are expecting that once the scheme has bedded in and the bus companies and employers are on board, we shall be able to bring in some matched funding to continue to support the scheme in future years. We also hope that if the economy improves, this will also mean that we can review the situation in the longer term depending on the success of the scheme and any further costs to the council. This fits in well with our immediate concern about getting young people into work and training.

### *Social & Community Services*

8. Adult social care is facing dramatic changes in Britain as people live longer. Our residents should grow older feeling valued, fulfilled and healthier. We are pleased that we are now taking on the public health responsibility in Oxfordshire, and endorse the joint work we already do with the NHS and our Director of Public Health. However, until we focus more on early intervention and enabling more of our elderly residents to be supported in their own homes, we feel that we need to invest an additional £2.378m in social care services for adults.
9. Without the voluntary effort of family and friends, the quality of life of disabled, ill and elderly people would be much lessened, and more people would of necessity have to rely on limited and cash-strapped social and health services. We want to show these carers how valuable they are, and to provide them with the support they need, including respite. We therefore invest an additional £0.400m next year to help alleviate the pressures on the learning and physical disabilities budget. This will be reviewed next year when the situation may be clearer about the demand and whether we will have sufficient funds to cover this particular budget pressure.
10. We understand how important it is to ensure that people are able to stay in their own homes, and how difficult this can be for the elderly or those with disabilities. We therefore propose investing £0.202m each year for 5 occupational therapists. This will cover one extra post per district and help to support those who are in need.
11. We are very concerned about the measures to charge for transport to day centres and the effect this may have on the users of the centres. We therefore propose not taking the full savings in this area, but just half the amount in the Cabinet budget. We feel that the price rise proposed is too great, though do accept that a modest rise to £2.50 instead of £5 would be

acceptable. This means that our cost to cover this amounts to £0.400m over 4 years.

12. We do not propose increasing the charges for attending our day centres at the current time, because we know how much our elderly appreciate this chance to get out of their homes during the week to socialise, enjoy a meal and take part in activities. We also do not wish to risk the viability of the centres by the clients choosing not to attend due to the increased costs. We will continue to monitor the situation in the future. By not taking this saving, this will amount to £0.720m over the four year term.
13. Finally, because we value our elderly residents, we are proposing a 'Silver Sunday Events' initiative which is to give £0.050m towards pump-priming communities to get together to provide an afternoon tea event on a Sunday afternoon, for those who may feel lonely and isolated.

### *Environment & Economy*

14. We recognise that Oxfordshire's highways continue to need investment. We are therefore proposing a total investment of £2.620m. We accept that the use of the Area Stewardship Fund is a new mechanism to ensure that maintenance work and other schemes previously covered by the highways budget can be spent in the different localities in the county. We support this, but do believe due to the success of the scheme in enabling county councillors to put forward measures for their individual communities, we would like to allocate an extra £0.630m to enable councillors to have an allocated budget of £10,000 each for improvements in their local area.
15. We are aware of the problems with the wet summer we have just endured and the pressures on gully maintenance and flood prevention. We are therefore proposing to invest in this area an amount of £0.600m over the next four years. Regular gully emptying will reduce flooding and we think it is important to take remedial steps here.
16. We believe we can save more in our property portfolio by reducing this by a further 5% and this will make a saving of £0.075m. This will be monitored in future years. We also feel that more could be done to reduce energy usage and again we believe a saving can be made here of another £0.050m.
17. We also propose a capital spend of £0.250m to help match fund grants for potential cycling and pedestrian schemes around the county. We are aware that there is government money available for these initiatives and we are keen to take advantage of them to benefit our communities.

### *Chief Executive's Office*

18. We propose keeping the Big Society Budget for another year, recognising the importance of being able to support local projects in our communities which has become very popular. As this has only been allowed for one

year, we would like to extend this for another year for all 63 councillors at a cost of £0.630m. We will then be in a position to review how the money is being spent.

### *Savings*

19. We pay for this investment in front-line services by cutting some backroom functions, by cutting reserves, by energy efficiencies and by potentially being able to share some of our services with other local authorities and organisations. The current CPI inflation rate is only 2.7% so we feel that 2.75% is adequate for the contract inflation figure at this stage, rather than the 3% in current contracts. This results in a saving of £0.432m. We understand the difficulty with not being able to change already agreed contract positions, but this is something we would have done differently if we had been part of the original negotiation. Sometimes, like in the case of the Area Stewardship Fund, we have found local contractors able to complete one-off projects at a much cheaper rate.
20. We note that our previously proposed savings in many backroom functions have been accepted now by the Cabinet. However, we feel that a small additional saving can still be made from the marketing budget of £0.050m.
21. We make the following change to reserves:
  - Contributing £1.831m from Directorate Earmarked reserves.
22. We are proposing to save £0.200m by using shared management with other councils and organisations where joint-working will be more cost-effective. We have already started this process and we believe that more could be done to explore this option further.
23. Taking £0.500m from Strategic Measures for pensions. This is because there is so much uncertainty about pensions for 2014/15 that we shall need to reassess our position nearer the time and make good any shortfall if needed.

### **Council Tax**

24. We accept the 1.99% Council Tax rise this year; because it is the amount we can take without triggering an unnecessary and costly referendum. We also feel that in these austere times, this is a reasonable sum of money to help retain our vital services. In the following two years, we propose Council Tax rises in line with the Cabinet proposals.

### **Conclusion**

25. We consider that these amendments show our commitment to investing in our priority, frontline services, whilst removing the worst excesses of the Cabinet's cuts, which in some areas of social care are hitting the most vulnerable in our society. They strike a balance between spending on the

## **CC9 (Liberal Democrat )**

essential services that residents in our community rely upon and the need to keep Council Tax levels as low as possible.

26. We therefore RECOMMEND Council to approve:
- i. A budget for 2013/14 and a medium term financial plan for 2014/15-2016/17 as amended in Liberal Democrat Annex 1;
  - ii. The Council Tax for 2013/14 as set out in that annex and in particular a Council Tax for Band D equivalent properties of £1,184.83.

**CLLR ZOÉ PATRICK**  
**Leader of the Opposition**

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## Liberal Democrat Group Budget Amendments

## ANNEX 1

	Year on Year					Total Investment over 4 Years £000
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	TOTAL	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
<b>Cabinet Net Pressures (+) and Savings (-)</b>	<b>-1,106</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>8,472</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>7,715</b>	
<b><u>Corporate</u></b>						
Limit contract inflation to 2.75% instead of 3% (saving of 0.25%) in 2013/14 and 2014/15	-432	-432			-864	-3,024
5% Contribution from Directorate Earmarked Reserves split over 2 years	-1,140	1,140			0	-1,140
5% Contribution from Directorate Earmarked Reserves split over 2 years		-691	691		0	-691
Reduce the Pensions Past Service Deficit Budget	-500				-500	-2,000
<b>Total Corporate</b>	<b>-2,072</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-1,364</b>	<b>-6,855</b>
<b><u>Children, Education &amp; Families</u></b>						
Phasing of Children's Centres Saving		400	-400		0	400
Corporate Parenting - reduce saving by 50%	90	90			180	630
Additional Youth Workers	100				100	400
Travel Concessions for 16-18 year olds	25	325	-223		127	629
<b>Total Children, Education &amp; Families</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>-623</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>2,059</b>
<b><u>Social &amp; Community Services</u></b>						
Support for Carers	400	-400			0	400
						400
Reduce by 50% the increased charge for Transport to Day Centres	100				100	
Do not increase charges at Day Centres	120	80			200	720
Additional 5 Occupational Therapists Posts - one per district	202				202	808
Silver Sunday Events	50	-50			0	50
<b>Total Social &amp; Community Services</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>-370</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>2,378</b>
<b><u>Environment &amp; Economy</u></b>						
Maintain Area Stewardship Fund for Members Local Priority Schemes	630				630	2,520
Gully Clearing/Flood Prevention	100		100		200	600
						-300
Increase revenue savings from property portfolio reductions by 5%	-75				-75	
Savings from reducing energy usage	-50				-50	-200
<b>Total Environment &amp; Economy</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>2,620</b>
<b><u>Chief Executive's Office</u></b>						
Big Society Fund (one-off)	630	-630			0	630
Reduce the Marketing and Communications Budget	-50				-50	-200
Savings from Shared Management	-200				-200	-800
<b>Total Chief Executive's Office</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>-630</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-250</b>	<b>-370</b>
<b>TOTAL Net Pressures (+) and Savings (-)</b>	<b>-1,106</b>	<b>-39</b>	<b>8,640</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>7,715</b>	<b>-168</b>
<b>Contribution to(+)/from(-) the efficiency reserve</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>-8,640</b>	<b>-220</b>	<b>-7,715</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Capital Programme Area	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	TOTAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b><u>Highways &amp; Transport</u></b>					
Match Funding Grants for Pedestrian and Cycling Projects	250				250

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**COUNTY COUNCIL – 19 FEBRUARY 2013**

**AMENDMENT BY THE LABOUR GROUP TO THE CABINET BUDGET**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**RECOMMEND Council to approve:**

Add

- (A)8 A letter being sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and all Oxfordshire MPs expressing its belief that the Lib/Dem/Tory Government has seriously mis-managed the economy of the Country and regrets the fact that the Local Government Sector has had to bear such large reductions in their budgets which have led to Oxfordshire needing to set a budget which will make it difficult for it to deliver services.

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## Green Group Amendments to the Cabinet Budget 2013

### Introduction

This is the fourth consecutive budget to deliver major cuts in services, and three more are promised in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The total savings are £200million, of which £60million are said to have been reinvested, for a cut of £140million. The economic policies of the national government are such that we can predict that there will be further cuts. The area most damaged is Adult Social Care, which bears at least 40% of the burden, a total of £56million, of which £30million will be taken over the next four years. The people affected are extremely disabled. The criteria which must be satisfied for them to get any help at all makes this a necessity. These cuts will inevitably cause suffering to people whom it is our responsibility to help. It is possible to avoid damaging these people and it is the primary function of this amendment to show how that can be done. This sequence of cuts undermines local government itself. It is possible the progress of more than a hundred years will be reversed.

The Green Party would prefer that adequate services for disabled people and children were funded by collecting the taxes which very rich individuals and major corporations presently evade. However, that would require a government with different priorities. We see a way to be of practical help here and now. We therefore propose a Council Tax increase of 3.75%, which would cost the average Council Tax payer an additional £20.44 for the year or £1.70 per month. Over four years we would raise about £30million, £24million of which would go directly to Adult Social Care. We are happy that it would require a referendum to achieve the increases. We believe that the people of the County, faced with the consequences of continued cuts, would choose to pay the modest increases. If they do not, then our proposals would fall.

The extra Council Tax will restore less than half the funding that the Cabinet budget removes, but it will restore almost all of the Adult Social Care 'savings'.

### Adult Social Care:

The present system is seriously flawed. Social Care has been underfunded by Labour and Conservative Governments for many years and has been hit by unprecedented cuts in the last three years. Oxfordshire has, for many years, been a low spender on Adult Social Care, compared to other Councils. We do not criticize the Councillors and staff who have worked hard to minimize the impact of inadequate funding.

Prevention and early intervention are particularly undeveloped. There is acknowledgement of their importance but too little money has been allocated to make it real. This makes life harder for the people affected. It is also foolish because many people deteriorate and need more expensive care than they would have with earlier help.

We are working toward fewer and shorter hospital stays and a reduction in residential care. Most people prefer to remain in their own homes as long as possible. But if that home life means long lonely days or grinding, unrelieved work by tired carers it would not be a great success. That is the

situation for too many people in Oxfordshire and cuts are making it worse. This amendment would provide substantial funding to help communities to make it possible for people with disabilities and their families to lead healthier and more fulfilled lives.

**Community Workers for Supportive Communities:**

We propose that every village and neighbourhood in the County be helped to provide activities and befriending networks for people of all ages, in the way that they desire. This means full use of public buildings and increased support for Village and Community Centres. It means the employment of Community Workers, by the County or voluntary sector organisations, whose role is to help local people create and maintain the activities they choose. There is a huge supply of good will and skill in all our communities. Public services and communities are not walled off. They strengthen and interact with each other. We provide funds for three Community Workers for each of the five District Council areas.

**Advice and Advocacy:**

There are tens of millions of pounds of disability and pension benefits which are not being claimed by Oxfordshire residents who are entitled to them. We provide funding so that every GP surgery in the County would have two sessions a week of first-class advice, including benefits, housing, community care, debt and local activities. The advisors would stand by people who are unable to make the complicated case needed to access benefits and services. This service would be provided through or in partnership with the CAB and other competent agencies. It is often said that an efficient Advice and Advocacy programme will bring £5 to £10 of increased income to claimants for each £1 spent. On this basis, the £2million we propose to spend would bring between £10 and £20million pounds to people who are entitled to the money, and will use it to improve their heating, food or leisure and will largely spend it in our local businesses. As important as the money is the preventive effect of timely, important information.

**Older People's Day Centres:**

The proposed increase in charges and transport charges, at the end of the phasing in period, will be from £5 a day to £20. That is a lot for many people who need the service. Some will drop out, to their loss and ours. The reduction in usage will threaten the whole service. The Day Centres can be hubs to the very large number of local Lunch Clubs and other activities which we call Tier 1 and which engage many more elderly and disabled people than Tiers 3 (these Day Centres) and Tier 2. With support and advice from the experienced and trained staff in the Day Centres many people will be able to remain within their communities which will be better able to care for them. The Centres will be able to contribute rather than wasting their efforts on fund-raising with the constant fear of closure. This expenditure allows for a fair increase, from £5 to £10 at the end of the phasing, but removes the dangers posed by the drastic increase.

**Carers Services (including short breaks):**

By now everyone knows that our entire Health and Social care system really rests on the backs of the relatives and friends we call Carers. The County has significantly improved services for Carers in recent years. While that was happening the goalposts have been moving. Not only do we have a population with a rapidly growing number of very old people, we have many older Carers: 90 year old spouses, 70 year old 'children' who are also looking after grandchildren, both of whose parents

are working, many people in their eighties who are still caring for Learning Disabled children. There are the parents of the many people who would not have survived in earlier times, but are now making lives for themselves with the loving attention of those parents. Years of cuts are straining everybody. This funding will make a practical difference. It will also be a message that we will not desert those who are doing so much.

Mencap has done a recent survey which found that 80% of the parents of people with Learning Disabilities find themselves at breaking point. This is the same as in their survey 10 years ago. The two things that can improve life for Carers are good services for their loved ones and both regular and flexible short breaks. This funding is an important addition to what already exists, although still far too little

**Add Funding for a Specialist and Crisis Care Team (in-house):**

Last year the Council eliminated the remnants of its directly employed Domiciliary Care staff. They were seen to be unable to compete with Agencies whose staff usually had no pension plan and often were not paid for the time traveling from client to client. The wages for both publicly and privately employed staff were and remain low. There is increasing evidence of poor quality service from the private agencies and concern about the future of a very important occupation. The idea that Care Work requires minimal skills, aptitude and training is increasingly seen to be inaccurate.

I understand that the Council has employed a small number of Care staff to provide flexibility. We would like to build on that. There are many clients who require the attention of a particularly sensitive and skilled person. This fund can help in the development of such a team. It will also be able to work where there is a shortage of private agencies and in times of unusual levels of illness.

**Restore Half the Cuts to Learning Disabled and Physically Disabled People:**

The 'personal budget' approach to Social Care is meant to provide services which are closer to the desires of the individual. It is not meant to be a way of surreptitiously reducing those services. The idea that £4million for Learning Disabled people can magically be saved by "more efficient delivery of care" is unbelievable. It can only be done by real cuts in service. Our amendment restores £2million. It is by no means certain that this increase will allow for proper provision of care, but it will come much closer. Similarly the £400,000 cut in the budget for Physically Disabled is based on the marvellous efficiency. There will need to be well documented evidence of how this is done. We restore half the cut, £200,000, and hope that will meet the needs.

**Restore £12 million to Older People's Services:**

The cuts to Older People's services are many and rather strange. £4.155million is 'saved' by having the 'Older People's Pool' meet its own pressures. This is not really a plan and can only be made by cuts which will be made in unidentified ways. There is an item which invests £300,000 in early client intervention to reduce the cost of care in one year. On the basis of this investment £1.2 million is cut the following year. This just makes a joke of the valid principle of early intervention leading to savings. I am fully convinced that Staff and Councillors are working hard to preserve services in the face of unprecedented cuts but it is misleading to pretend it can be done without considerable loss. Our amendment restores £12million which should allow for services to be maintained over the next four years.

**Increase Spending on Mental Health:**

I hear a lot from constituents with Mental Health problems. They are aware that cuts made over many years have made their lives more difficult. The issues are complex but County Council Social Workers have made important contributions in the past and, while there is no simplistic division between Social Service and health approaches, there is room for an increased input into an important and struggling situation.

**Planning and Funding to Provide Services when Carers Become Unable to Care:**

The two over-riding issues that have worried Carers are what happen when there is a sudden reason why they cannot perform their caring role and the even more desperate concern to know that their loved one will be properly cared for when they die or become incapacitated. The County has made extraordinary progress on the first and very large numbers of Carers are signed up in a scheme which operates 24/7 to make sure that immediate care is available. In my contact with Carers I find that the second concern remains unmet. The first need is for a systematic approach to all Carers and Service users to discuss what their fears are and how they could be met. The goal would be for all Carers to have agreed a long-term plan and for the County to confirm that it will meet the needs which cannot otherwise be met. It may be that this will not be very expensive because the County would anyway have to intervene if it was necessary. The main difference would be early assessment and certainty. This would be of great comfort to all concerned.

**Children, Education and Families:**

**Restore Savings in Children's Centres:**

From 2014 onwards £800,000 a year will be removed from Children's Centres. Children's Centres are one of the great social advances of recent years. They are important in areas with many poor and/or troubled families where they provide mutual support, learning about children and pleasure for parents and children without stigma. They increasingly provide similar benefits for higher earning families who share the strains of work and child care. It is good news that none of the Centres are being closed but this is a major cut in funding and will create inevitable problems. The staffing was diluted in the passage from Sure Start to Children's Centres. There is no doubt that assistance with the care of small children is a useful and efficient way of avoiding desperate and expensive outcomes. Our amendment restores the cuts in full.

**Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children:**

Being the parent of a child with serious disabilities is often continuous and unremitting hard work. It can create strains between partners and problems for other children. A regular short break to which they can look forward is a great help. Flexible help in an emergency is also life-restoring. It is not easy to make good provision because of the diversity of needs. Some children find it hard being with others and may need a liver-in carer. Some children thrive on the company. Making possible this help to people who are, without complaint, devoting themselves to their difficult responsibilities, is a basic requirement for those of us who need it, for those who will someday need it and for the rest of us, happy to participate in a decent society. The additional tax provides £800,000 to add to the other funds available.

### **Support English Language Teaching (ESOL):**

It is of enormous importance that people living in a country learn to speak its language. It is important for the individuals, for their children, for the economy and for us all to get to know each other. Labour and Conservative governments sharply reduced the number of free places available for learners. In Oxfordshire this meant a reduction of 700 students; people who wanted to learn but could no longer afford the tuition. Support was initially limited to people on benefits. Most of our newer residents were in families with people in employment but on low incomes.

There has been much work recently to improve the situation. The County, other publicly funded providers, voluntary groups and community groups have been working together. There have been an increase in trained volunteers, efforts to put them in touch with prospective students and the creation of a small bursary fund for those who need the certificates that only official, paid-for courses can provide. These various initiatives are in need of money to improve and expand their efforts. This funding would be of great help and repay itself many times over.

### **Increase Social Work Support for Adolescents:**

Well publicized cases have made clear the level of vulnerability of adolescents in our society. Protecting them is difficult and expensive, as is helping them put their lives together after painful events. The Cabinet's budget includes a significant increase in funding for Social Workers. It is not likely to be enough. This amendment allows for an additional useful sum. The young people and society at large pay a high price if this work is not done well.

### **Supporting People:**

#### **Homelessness Services:**

Homelessness in Oxford is increasing and will increase further with the long recession and destructive Government policies. We see more rough sleepers on the streets but many more are hidden. Supporting People has been systematically cut and its provision for homeless people is at especial risk. This is a modest amount which will provide some help. In economic downturns it is important to provide services for the worst hit, which is good for them and helpful for the economy.

#### **Cultural Services:**

**Libraries, Museums and Historical Services** have been cut over recent years. They are of great importance to our lives. We need increased funding such as this to provide buoyance to services which feel under siege. They can attract local support to reach out and create and repay enthusiasm. It is a waste to use volunteer support as sometimes grudging defenders of threatened services. These funds allow for optimism.

#### **Banbury Mill Arts Centre:**

The Centre has been very successful in providing a very varied range of activities. It is of great importance to Banbury and the substantial cut is damaging. Oxfordshire remains an unequal place for the Arts, broadly defined, with such a large proportion in Oxford. The Mill is a model to be emulated, not reduced.

## **Prudential Borrowing Costs:**

### **Borrow £4million to Improve Dangerous Roads:**

The Government used the statistics of the numbers of people Killed and Injured on the roads (KSI) over the last few years of the past century to establish targets for each Authority, aiming to cut the numbers in half over the following ten years. In the first five years Oxfordshire was pretty much on target and deaths and serious injuries declined in line with the rest of the country. Over the next five years the rest of the country continued to improve and their KSI went down by 26%. Oxfordshire didn't improve at all. For unknown reasons it has fallen behind the rest of the country. The current Government has abandoned targets but targets or no, something has to be done in Oxfordshire to bring us in line with the rest of the country. One way is to tackle the stretches of road which are known to have high accident rates. The Cabinet Member has identified five such stretches, four of which are in Oxford City. He said he could not deal with them because of lack of funds. We propose £4million pounds to be borrowed to improve these stretches with the goal of reducing serious accidents.

### **Borrow £1 million pounds to Reduce Cycling Accidents:**

The results of the targeting exercise described above revealed a disastrous situation with regard to deaths and serious injuries to cyclists. The target aimed to reduce KSI by half in the ten years. For cyclists, the target certainly wasn't met. Instead the numbers doubled. This is a horrible waste of health and life and puts a dampener on cycling which provides valuable exercise and is a carbon free mode of transport. We propose borrowing £1million pounds for the County to investigate, to consult with cyclists and other road users and to devise means of reducing this frightening toll.

### **Borrow £5 million to Improve Insulation and Reduce Fuel Poverty:**

Climate change is increasingly destructive, causing droughts and floods and other unusual weather. Much of the world, certainly including the U.K. is being slow to reduce the carbon emissions which are the main cause. One of the most efficient ways of doing this is to reduce the need to burn carbon emitters by improving insulation. There have been various government initiatives to encourage home insulation, including full grants to poor and/or elderly or disabled people. These have had some success in take-up but it has been patchy. The most successful approach was by Kirklees Council. They designated whole areas for free insulation and went door-to-door to help householders fill out the necessary paperwork. For every pound they put up they were able to draw in seven pounds from the Government and energy companies which were required to pay for needy people who met their criteria. The most generous of these schemes have now come to an end. There is, however, a new policy for the poorest and most vulnerable people, the Energy Company obligation (ECO). The Council would designate the Wards in the County, both urban and in communities of under 10,000, with the most poverty and disability for the Kirklees approach. There would be heavy publicity about the availability of free insulation and the door to door approach. The ECO could be expected to provide for a large portion of the households in the areas known for poverty and/or disability. We might attract an equal amount of funding to the £5million we are investing. At any rate, we would be able to insulate many thousands of houses. This would save a



large amount of carbon and make many people warmer and with lower fuel bills. We could make a large dent in the number of people in the County who suffer fuel poverty. We know there are a substantial number who struggle to keep warm, with serious consequences for their health, also entailing a large amount of expense for health and Social Care agencies.

### **Conclusion:**

We are proposing an increase in the Cabinet's suggested Council Tax rate, from 1.99% to 3.75%. It will cost the average Council Tax payer an additional £20.44 a year (£1.70 per month). This would require a referendum. We welcome the opportunity to focus public attention on the importance of the County's services, the costs of the lower tax rate and how much of great value could be accomplished with a small increase.

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**Green Group Budget Amendments****ANNEX**

	Year on Year				TOTAL £000	Total Investment Over 4 Years £000
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17		
	£000	£000	£000	£000		
<b>Cabinet Net Pressures (+) and Savings (-)</b>	<b>-1,106</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>8,472</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>7,715</b>	
<b>Additional amount to spend from having a 3.75% increase in each year</b>	<b>-4,632</b>	<b>-3,577</b>	<b>-370</b>	<b>-388</b>	<b>-8,967</b>	<b>-30,387</b>
<b><u>Social &amp; Community Services</u></b>						
Community Development	500				<b>500</b>	2,000
Advice and Advocacy	500				<b>500</b>	2,000
Carers Services (including short breaks)	500				<b>500</b>	2,000
Specialist and Crisis Care Team	200				<b>200</b>	800
Planning/Funding re Carers' Incapacity	225				<b>225</b>	900
Increase Spending on Mental Health	200				<b>200</b>	800
Reduce by 50% the charges for Older Peoples Day Centres and Transport	160	40			<b>200</b>	760
Restore 50% of the Learning Disabilities saving			1,000		<b>1,000</b>	2,000
Restore 50% of the Physical Disabilities saving		100		100	<b>200</b>	400
Restore Savings in Older People's Services	3,000				<b>3,000</b>	12,000
<b>Total Social and Community Services</b>	<b>5,285</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>6,525</b>	<b>23,660</b>
<b><u>Children, Education &amp; Families</u></b>						
Restore Savings in Children's Centres		800			<b>800</b>	2,400
Increased Social Work Support for Adolescents	200				<b>200</b>	800
Short Breaks, Carers of Disabled Children	200				<b>200</b>	800
Support English Language Teaching (ESOL)	60				<b>60</b>	240
<b>Total Children, Education &amp; Families</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>4,240</b>
<b><u>Supporting People</u></b>						
Homelessness Services	300				<b>300</b>	1,200
<b>Total Supporting People</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>1,200</b>
<b><u>Cultural Services</u></b>						
Increase funding for the Library Service	200				<b>200</b>	800
Increase funding for the Museum Service	100				<b>100</b>	400
Increase funding for the History Service	100				<b>100</b>	400
Increase funding for the Mill Arts Centre	90	-90			<b>0</b>	90
<b>Total Cultural Services</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>-90</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>1,690</b>
<b><u>Corporate</u></b>						
Reduce Contingency	-1,000				<b>-1,000</b>	-4,000
To meet the costs of holding a referendum (including rebilling costs if necessary)	500	-500			<b>0</b>	500
Prudential Borrowing Costs - Improve Dangerous Roads (£4m Capital)		160			<b>160</b>	480
Prudential Borrowing Costs - Reduce Cycling Accidents (£1m Capital)		40			<b>40</b>	120
Prudential Borrowing Costs - Insulation to reduce fuel poverty (£5m Capital)		200			<b>200</b>	600
<b>Total Corporate</b>	<b>-500</b>	<b>-100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-600</b>	<b>-2,300</b>
<b>Total Net Pressures (+) and Savings (-)</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>-2,698</b>	<b>9,102</b>	<b>-68</b>	<b>6,633</b>	<b>28,490</b>
<b>Contribution to (+) / From (-) the Efficiency Reserve</b>	<b>-297</b>	<b>2,698</b>	<b>-9,102</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>-6,633</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
Proposed Council Tax Increase	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%		
Band D Council Tax	£1,205.27	£1,250.47	£1,297.36	£1,346.00		
Difference to Cabinet Proposed Increase	£20.44	£36.02	£37.37	£38.76		

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

<b>Programme Area</b>	<b>2013/14</b> £000	<b>2014/15</b> £000	<b>2015/16</b> £000	<b>2016/17</b> £000	<b>TOTAL</b> £000
<b><u>Higways &amp; Transport</u></b>					
Improvements to Dangerous Roads	4,000				4,000
Cycling Schemes to reduce cycling accidents	1,000				1,000
<b><u>Environment &amp; Economy Other</u></b>					
Insulation Schemes to reduce fuel poverty	5,000				5,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,000</b>