

The Green Budget 2017

A More Compassionate Oxfordshire

This is election year and as expected to try to fool the electorate there are relatively few extra cuts (£2.2m) to the budget for the forthcoming year 2017-2018.

However the devastating cuts, on a massive scale, from previous years are being implemented and if the Tories are re-elected their announced target of cutting **£377m** will be implemented by 2021. That means effectively that another **£77m** of reductions in the budget will be made after the elections are over.

The cuts commenced in earnest in 2010/11 with a cut of **£35m**. In 2011/12 that grew to **£54.6m**. Another **£37.2m** was taken out in 2012/13 followed by **£42.5m** in 2013/14. They continued to slash services in 2014/15 with another **£34.5m** followed by **£42.8m** in 2015/16 and culminating with a massive **£52.5m** in last year's 2016/17 budget. Altogether over **£300m** million has been cut from the budget so far largely focus on Adult Social Care. Two thirds of this has been reinvested into the services with the greatest increase in demand but even this has still meant over **£125m** of direct unmitigated cuts to the elderly, the sick, special needs children, the disabled and the homeless.

In putting forward a budget we are showing that there is an alternative, that you don't have to keep bringing forward Austerity budgets that turn their backs on the most needy. Legally and financially, despite reductions in Central Government funding, it is possible to devise a budget based on compassion and building a better society all that is needed is the political will.

In devising the Green Budget our policy has always been a dented shield focused on protecting the most vulnerable. By restoring the cuts for special education needs, providing enough money to ensure the remaining Community Children's Centres can run effectively rather than close, (this includes Donnington Doorstep) plus putting back the services for families with disabled children our commitment to help children in need is clear. Our proposal to restore grants to SEN children's theatre and establish the mobile library service to schools is further evidence of our commitment to the next generation.

For the elderly where the cuts have been the deepest, our budget sees the restoration of the Falls Service, dementia care and the return of the much needed respite care and support for carers. Carers, who give thousands of hours

every week to the sick and disabled, need support. The Green budget also stops the closure of 47 much needed Health and Wellbeing and Learning Disability Day Care Centres for senior citizens.

Rather than abandon the growing number of homeless the Green budget will put back the million pound cut made over the last few years. Restoring Funding for the Advice Centres who provide help for the most disadvantaged to navigate the complex benefits system is also an essential part of our Green Budget.

A massive range of organisations and charities that do so much to help those who cannot help themselves, are struggling now as a result of seemingly endless cuts. We have set aside £2.6m in a special Crisis Fund to assist them in their work and stop them collapsing. The reliance on the Third Sector is now overwhelming and this emergency reserve is critical.

The increase in the Council Tax we have calculated to restore most of the most direct recent cuts focused on Adult Social care is **7%**. That is only **2% more** than the Cabinet plan to raise in Council Tax and amounts to **50p per** household per week, only 20p per ratepayer extra. Something affluent Oxfordshire could afford and something that could easily be won in a referendum.

Our budget also seeks to stop the relentless attack on public transport by restoring the subsidies to rural bus services and supporting community transport schemes not leaving people isolated in Oxfordshire villages. Our strategy is to fund this restoration by small increases in a range of car park charges and a £2 per day charge on Park and Rides. Congestion is eased, pollution reduced and people are not left stranded in the countryside.

In paying for the Green budget we have also taken away the obscene 19% increase in Councillors allowances in 2016 and make a slight cut in very senior officer salaries. The Council can manage with fewer portfolio holders and it's time for the Council offices to be available for commercial lettings especially in the evening. We would also add in half a million from reserves. If there were ever a time to use reserves this is it.

Working a financial balance within the system is one way to protect the environment. We can generate the money towards a European cycle safety scheme known as the Benelux System by way of implementing a Large Employer's Parking Levy.

Although only a tiny amount, appointing a Cycle Planning officer and Wildlife Specialist could actually make the implementation of new policies promoted by the Greens adopted as Council policy recently a reality. We have also

earmarked small amounts of money for feasibility studies into buy outs of NHS PFI contracts, an Electronic Road Pricing scheme and new energy saving street lighting systems successfully operating in Hampshire.

Again we have included a large scale insulation scheme not simply to cut Council energy bills but to take advantage of matched funding projects that are on offer from Energy Companies meaning the Council can have three times the value invested.

The Green budget is a symbol of hope that we can have a local government with a human face that puts compassion first, that focuses on the most disadvantaged that helps preserve a more humane Oxfordshire. By asking those who can pay just a tiny percentage more just 2% , it can be done. It is not too much to ask and we believe it is the type of local services that are needed and which the people of Oxfordshire want to see.

We have also set out (in Annexes 4 & 5) what we would do if the referendum was not successful, we would still be able to support Community Children's Centres and daytime support for the elderly.

Recommendations

The Council is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) (subject to a successful referendum):**
 - 1. (in respect of revenue) approve:**
 - i. a budget for 2017/18 and medium term financial plan for 2017/18 – 2020/21 as amended in Green Group Annex 1;**
 - ii. the council tax and precept calculations for 2017/18 set out in Annex 3 and in particular:**
 - a. a precept for 2017/18 of £334,302,355; and**
 - b. a council tax for Band D equivalent properties of £1,371.35**
 - 2. (in respect of capital) approve:**
 - i. a Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2020/21 as amended in Green Group Annex 2**
- b) (in the event that the Council Tax increase in a 1 (ii) is not approved as a result of the referendum):**
 - 1. (in respect of revenue) approve:**
 - i. a budget for 2017/18 and medium term financial plan for 2017/18 – 2020/21 as amended in Green Group Annex 4;**

2. (in respect of capital) approve:

- ii. a Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2020/21 as amended in Green Group Annex 5.**

Cllr David Williams
Leader of the County Green Group

Green Group Budget Amendments - Revenue

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total All
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Cabinet Net Pressures/Savings	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Changes to proposed budget					
<u>Corporate</u>					
Additional income from a 7% council tax increase	-6.280	-0.448	-0.248	-0.258	-7.234
Cost of referendum	0.638	-0.638			0.000
Create a trading arm of the Council to include services such as Legal, Finance & HR		-0.100	-0.100	-0.050	-0.250
Hire out rooms in County Hall for meetings and private functions in the evenings and weekends	-0.050				-0.050
Reduce pay budgets of Senior Staff	-0.100				-0.100
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
Prudential Borrowing costs for Insulation Scheme (borrow £7m)		0.300			0.300
Contribution from Reserves		0.500	-0.500		0.000
Use of Budget Reserve		-0.217	-0.052	0.308	0.039
<u>Children, Education and Families</u>					
Ongoing Support for Community Children's Centres	1.940				1.940
Grant to Donnington Family Centre	0.060				0.060
Retain Early Years SEN inclusive teachers provision (17CEF6)	0.100				0.100
Retain contracts for services to disabled children and families (17CEF12)	0.250				0.250
<u>Adult social care</u>					
Do not implement the day services review	0.604	2.620			3.224
Re-instate the falls service	0.273				0.273
Retain funding for carers (17SCS8)	0.160				0.160
Retain funding for Information and Advice (17SCS9)		0.120			0.120
Retain funding for Carers Respite (17SCS10)	0.100				0.100
Retain funding for Intervention and Preventative Services (17SCS25)			0.400		0.400
Funding for Homeless Services		0.500	0.500		1.000
Crisis Fund for Vulnerable people impacted by the cuts	2.590	-2.590			0.000
<u>Environment & Economy</u>					
Funding for Bus Subsidies and Community Transport	0.656				0.656
Increase park & ride charges £2 per day	-0.700				-0.700
Increase other parking charges and CPZ Permits plus new income from additional CPZ	-0.250				-0.250
Increase in other general charges	-0.060				-0.060
Savings in energy costs from insulation scheme on Council properties	-0.050				-0.050
Biodiversity Specialist	0.035				0.035
County Cycling Planning Advisory Officer	0.035				0.035
Feasibility Study of an Electronic Road Pricing scheme	0.050	-0.050			0.000
Feasibility Study of a Street Lighting Energy Saving scheme	0.050	-0.050			0.000
<u>Corporate Services</u>					
Reduce the number of Members on the Cabinet by three	-0.060				-0.060
Reduce the level of Members Allowances	-0.100				-0.100
Commission a feasibility study to assist NHS PFI buyouts	0.039	-0.039			0.000
Libraries - Mobile School Library	0.070				0.070
Maintain funding to the Arts		0.092			0.092
Revised net pressure/savings	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Green Group Budget Amendments - Capital

<u>Amendments to the Capital Programme</u>	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	TOTAL £m
Capital receipt generated from sale of County Heritage assets	-0.100				-0.100
<u>Transport Programme</u>					
Benelux Style Cycle Network and Improvements to Dangerous Roads			2.250	4.500	6.750
<u>Environment & Economy Programme</u>					
Insulation Scheme	7.000				7.000
Total amendments to the Capital Programme	6.900	0.000	2.250	4.500	13.650

Council Tax and Precepts 2017/18

Council Tax Data

1. In order to set its budget for 2017/18, 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 **£334,302,355** 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 2017/18 is as follows:

Council Tax Calculation 2017/18

	£m
County Council net expenditure after specific grants	428.769
Less: Revenue Support Grant	-18.665
Business Rates Top Up	-37.821
Non-Domestic Rating Income	-31.165
Council Tax Collection Fund Adjustments	-7.277
Business Rates Collection Fund Adjustments	0.461
Council Tax Requirement (R)	334.302
Council Tax Base (assuming losses on collection) (T)	243,776
Band D Council Tax (R/T)	£1,371.35

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 £1,371.35, the council tax for other bands is as follows:

Property Band	Property Values	Band D Proportion	2017/18 £ p
A	Up to £40,000	6/9	914.23
B	Over £40,000 and up to £52,000	7/9	1,066.61
C	Over £52,000 and up to £68,000	8/9	1,218.98
D	Over £68,000 and up to £88,000	9/9	1,371.35
E	Over £88,000 and up to £120,000	11/9	1,676.09
F	Over £120,000 and up to £160,000	13/9	1,980.84
G	Over £160,000 and up to £320,000	15/9	2,285.58
H	Over £320,000	18/9	2,742.70

Table 2

Allocation of Precept to Districts

The County Council precept (£334,302,355) is the sum of the council tax income required to fund the Council's budget.

District Council	Tax Base Number	Assumed Precept Due
		£
Cherwell	51,639.50	70,815,828.33
Oxford City	44,623.40	61,194,299.59
South Oxfordshire	55,557.20	76,188,366.22
Vale of White Horse	49,406.00	67,752,918.10
West Oxfordshire	42,550.00	58,350,942.50
TOTAL	243,776.10	334,302,354.74

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 2017.

Green Group Budget Amendments - Revenue

Changes to proposed budget if referendum is not successful

	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	Total All £m
Cabinet Net Pressures/Savings	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Changes to proposed budget if referendum is not successful					
<u>Corporate</u>					
Cost of referendum	0.638	-0.638			0.000
Create a trading arm of the Council to include services such as Legal, Finance & HR		-0.100	-0.100	-0.050	-0.250
Hire out rooms in County Hall for meetings and private functions in the evenings and weekends	-0.050				-0.050
Reduce pay budgets of Senior Staff	-0.100				-0.100
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
Use of Budget Reserve	-0.068	-0.082	0.100	0.050	0.000
<u>Children, Education and Families</u>					
Ongoing Support for Community Children's Centres	0.800				0.800
<u>Adult social care</u>					
Reduce the savings required on Daytime Support		0.820			0.820
<u>Environment & Economy</u>					
Increase park & ride charges £2 per day	-0.700				-0.700
Increase other parking charges and CPZ Permits plus new income from additional CPZ	-0.250				-0.250
Increase in other general charges	-0.060				-0.060
Savings in energy costs from insulation scheme on Council properties	-0.050				-0.050
<u>Corporate Services</u>					
Reduce the number of Members on the Cabinet by three	-0.060				-0.060
Reduce the level of Members Allowances	-0.100				-0.100
Revised net pressure/savings	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Green Group Budget Amendments - Capital

Changes to proposed capital programme if referendum is not successful

<u>Amendments to the Capital Programme</u>	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m	TOTAL £m
Capital receipt generated from sale of County Heritage assets	-0.100				-0.100
<u>Transport Programme</u>					
Benelux Style Cycle Network and Improvements to Dangerous Roads			2.250	4.500	6.750
Total amendments to the Capital Programme	-0.100	0.000	2.250	4.500	6.650