

## AGENDA ITEM No 9b

**Update of Devon County Councillor for Tavistock & Gulworthy February 2022 [debo.sellis@devon.gov.uk](mailto:debo.sellis@devon.gov.uk) 07765103316**

**BUDGET: The Revenue and Capital budget book is 190 pages. It is available on line [www.devon.gov.uk/budgets](http://www.devon.gov.uk/budgets)**

The Government has provided all Local Authorities with a single year settlement.

**Revenue**The total for the targets set by Cabinet in December 2021 is £629.4 million. There are significant financial pressures £87.4 million which relate mainly to increased pressures on Children's and Adult & Health Services. Saving initiatives of £38.7 million are required to set a balanced budget, which all local government authorities must deliver by law.

There is an additional income of £8million from the NHS to support social care & has been agreed. The Budget for 2022/23 includes significant investment in services but, in order to deliver the budget, pressures must be contained and planned savings achieved. This will not be an easy task. Devon County Council hasn't borrowed any money since 2009. The previous administration had borrowed over £400 million @5% interest over many years when the treasury management was making about £13million in interest per year. The loan is fixed and would attract significant cost on penalties if paid off in full before the agreed date. After 2022 /23 there is significant uncertainty around DCC's sources of funding including the Levelling Up White Paper & what that means in the distribution of Government funding to local authorities, including Devon. DCC plans to use just under £30million of earmarked reserves in 2022'23 to invest in services which is just under 24% of the authority's estimated earmarked reserves of £125.5 million. There is a significant projected deficit on the High Needs block for DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant). This deficit is currently held in a ring fenced account but it is not certain what will happen after the Regulations come to an end in March 2023. The earmarked reserves are forecast to remain about £80million. It costs about £4million per day to maintain services for DCC. Council Tax for DCC will be increase 1% for Social Care & 2.99% for general costs. West Devon Borough Council has increase 2.9% and Tavistock has increased 7.4%. Add the increases for Police & Fire Service, the average increase on a Band D house will be £2,166 I am advised.

**Capital:Tavistock & the budget:**Tavistock Community College – Accessible changing space £9000Whitchurch Community Primary School – Block 01 pitched roof £22,000Tavistock Primary School fire doors & Fire Compartmentation work £95,000 Tavistock Household Waste Recycling Centre £5,838,000 The County Councillor locality budget will be decreased from £10,000 - £8,000 for this year.

**HIGHWAYS** The Neighbourhood Highway officer will be leaving the Tavistock area & will be replaced by another officer. I thank the previous officer Tom Lee and look forward to meeting the new officer. We note that many areas have had the gullies cleared & I have copied Gulworthy Parish Council about issues relating to Crowndale Road gullies. There are many roadworks due relating to utilities and bridge work which have been forwarded to Clerks and Chairman for sharing with councillors.

**WASTE**I am delighted that Tavistock, Crowndale site will be improved with the investment of almost £6million. The work is being delayed because of the budget pressures, however it is good to see this much needed amenity in the budget book. I can assure residents and members, that I have been working on this

since 2009! Devon County Council is a huge Local Authority & we have to take our turn!

**HEALTH** Tavistock Health & Wellbeing Alliance grows in strength & I am delighted West Devon Borough Council is actively recognising the merit, plus the Citizens Advice is actively engaging. Councillors who haven't attended the Alliance, may be surprised how many statutory and volunteer organisations work well together helping communication and access to support. It is unfortunate that the Councillor Locality budget is being reduced by £2,000, & clearly demonstrates how all the graft over the last 5 years are paying off. Our Health Service and Government are actively seeking communities to work together, fortunately in Tavistock & Gulworthy we are ahead of the curve! Thanks go to all of you who support many areas. Working as a team helps us recognise the people who give to those who need help. Tavistock Local's help and the access to the West Devon CVS's index & formation of "*inTouch Tavi*" to volunteer groups have been so useful. Covid restrictions are due to be relaxed further, and we work with government guidelines.

**EDUCATION** We note the financial support in the budget for local schools & realise that most of the schools have about 20% of pupils with some form of SEN (Special Educational Need) whether that be health related or academically. We continue to lobby for fairer funding. Since 2009 Devon as a county has gone from about 5<sup>th</sup> from the bottom for Pupil Premium to midway. I am looking forward to meeting all the new Head Teachers. I have met some of them, plus I look forward to working with Gulworthy Primary School about some highlighted issues.

News in general... I am working with volunteers on possibly sign posting cut throughs and short cuts around our town, so that people might walk more. All my locality budget has been spent and can be seen on the DCC website ... look up your local councillor. The Tamar Valley AONB goes from strength to strength & following the Glover report, will be a statutory consultee in Development Management West Devon Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny meeting had a presentation from the TVAONB & is glad WD accepted a recommendation which I suggested that future local development should be landscaped with native planting which should encourage the natural fauna and flora. It makes sense with Climate Change & Biodiversity that we should use the expertise. I have been the Devon County Council representative for the Cornish and West Devon Mining World Heritage Partnership since 2009, it is wonderful seeing the works completed on the Guildhall, Butcher's Hall, 1, Chapel Lane and other areas in our town. Sitting on the group which decided where Heritage Lottery Funding was directed was a different experience for me! from hard hat & high viz' jacket visits, to civilised completion, it has been an exciting opportunity as a councillor. The street signage culling from a few years ago was a worthwhile project & befitting for Devon's only World Heritage Town!

There is much more to report on, but being mindful that councillors have requested a short report. I'll stop.

Let me know if there are issues where I can help.