

CABINET RESPONSE TO BUDGET SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS



No.	Recommendation	Proposed Cabinet Response
1.	<p>That Cabinet continue to make all efforts to build the working balances back up to 5% within two financial years to ensure an effective financial buffer for the organisation and therefore reduce financial risk.</p> <p>Budget Scrutiny also recommends that Audit and Governance Committee look at the methodology behind the setting of the 5% target and whether financial modelling of future risks and past performance could be used to recommend a more appropriate level in the future.</p>	<p>Agree: Achieving and maintaining working balances to mitigate financial risk to the Council remains a priority for the Council. However, this is conditional on Plymouth not suffering further and damaging reductions in funding as a result of the government's Fairer Funding review. The Audit and Governance Committee will be asked to review the methodology for setting an appropriate level of balances.</p>
2.	<p>That Cabinet reconsider the approach to legacy savings, particularly with regard the vacancy saving factor of 5%, and determine an alternate approach to addressing the challenge of meeting those savings in a more effective way.</p>	<p>Agree: Measures will be considered for implementation to address the requirement to maintain a vacancy saving target of 5%, and directorates will report on further measures to address other 'legacy' savings targets</p>
3.	<p>That the referendum threshold for setting Council Tax and the Adult Social Care precept is not breached.</p>	<p>Agree: Subject to the Council's ability to set a balanced budget in line with statutory requirements</p>
4.	<p>That Cabinet seek ways to increase the Community Grant for each Councillor as per the December 2019 Motion on Notice and clarify the allocation within the 2020/21 budget. This should include a review of the Community Grants guidance and criteria by a small cross-party group to ensure the best value and greatest impact is achieved from the grants.</p>	<p>Agree: The Cabinet Member will consider this request in line with the December 2019 Council Motion on Notice, and commission a review of the Community Grants guidance and criteria.</p>

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5.	<p>Cabinet ensures that the Medium Term Financial Plan is made available to Finance and Performance Scrutiny as soon as available, following clarification from Government on funding allocation, including fairer funding.</p>	<p>Agree: As soon as Government provides clarity about medium term funding allocations for local government, the implications for Plymouth will be analysed and shared.</p>
6.	<p>That Cabinet explore all avenues to promote caring careers within the city to support Adult Social Care (ASC), including mental health services, in order to support the workforce. This is with the intent of positively impacting both ASC service users and the ASC budget; acknowledging that both are interlinked.</p> <p>That Cabinet consider identifying and focussing the budget on key preventative and/or early intervention activities, such as community youth, sports development and mental health services.</p>	<p>Agree: A cross Council focus on promoting caring careers is prioritised, and prevention and early intervention remain a priority for the People Directorate, at the same time as balancing resources to meet acute demand.</p>
7.	<p>That Cabinet consider identifying and focussing the budget on key preventative and/or early intervention activities, such as community youth, sports development and mental health services.</p>	<p>As above</p>
8.	<p>That Cabinet identify which lessons learned from Adult Social Care, in terms of introducing new ways of working, could be transferred to Children's Social Care, recognising that key aspects of success included a long-term view, whole Council approach with cross-party support.</p>	<p>Agree: The current change programme in Children's Services is drawing on all the lessons learned from Adult Social Care, and is receiving support from across the Council's leadership, both from officers and politicians.</p>

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9.	That Cabinet enhance the approach to improving educational attainment by continuing to collaborate and engage with other local authorities with similar demographics to learn from and implement best practice.	Agree: visits to and collaboration with other, high performing councils are underway.
10.	That the Cabinet Member seek clarity from Government on the funding for Troubled Families programme beyond 2021 in order to provide assurance of the sustainability of the service and update Full Council as and when required.	Agree: The Cabinet will continue to press the Government for clarity about medium term funding for this important work, and will keep the Council updated
11.	That Cabinet prioritise in house foster caring with a view to increasing in-house provision of foster homes through improved training, skills and support for foster carers in the city.	Agree: Foster for Plymouth remains a key priority, and will be the focus of further support activity in the coming year for existing and new foster carers
12.	That Cabinet consider how the carbon/environmental impact of the budget can be clarified and quantified in future budget reports.	Agree: Following the adoption of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, and Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan the environmental impact of all key decisions including financial decisions will be further developed, communicated and reported.
13.	That Cabinet and the whole Council continue to communicate the tangible benefits of the impacts associated with carbon reduction/climate emergency actions, including clarification of the performance reporting framework, and the positive impacts for residents both environmentally and financially.	Agree: As (12) above. The Climate Emergency Action Plan makes clear commitments to taking immediate action to address carbon reduction challenges as well as assessing longer term initiatives for effectiveness. Commitments extend to facilitating a city-wide conversation and inspiring rapid local action through effective leadership to ensure a Plymouth-wide, bottom up response to this emergency.

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14.	That Cabinet continue to lobby central government in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework and Department for Transport guidelines to strengthen the climate/carbon emergency focus.	Agree: The Council will continue to use its relationship with the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government to push government to strengthen the emphasis on carbon reduction through planning and transport guidelines, and will use the opportunity of the publication of the Planning White Paper during 2020 as a focus for this.
15.	That Cabinet commits to the setting up of a cross-party Group to review Climate/Carbon impact of proposals and progress.	Agree: The Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene is developing proposals for appropriate governance to oversee the further development and delivery of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and the Corporate Carbon Reduction Plan

Budget Scrutiny also recommended that the following be listed to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees:

- That the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure commits to review transport options and the transport network, especially in relation to the cycle network and how this can be future proofed for users (Brexit, Infrastructure and Legislative Change Overview and Scrutiny Committee).