

# Cabinet



Date of meeting:	08 January 2024
Title of Report:	<b>Budget Scrutiny Recommendations</b>
Lead Member:	Councillor Ian Darcy (Chair of Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee)
Lead Strategic Director:	Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)
Author:	Ross Jago (Head of Governance Performance and Risk)
Contact Email:	Ross.jago@plymouth.gov.uk
Your Reference:	BudR23/25
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

## Purpose of Report

This Select Committee met to consider whether the Cabinet has an effective plan for the implementation of the budget for the next financial year, focusing on organisational priorities. This report sets out the recommendations made by the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee following its review of the Council's budget preparations for 2024-2025.

Taking into account positive feedback from the 2023/24 budget scrutiny process, information available to the Select Committee was available again, continuing amendments made to the 2023/24 process.

The committee undertook two days of scrutiny, with a third day if required on a date to be determined by the committee, to provide flexibility for further discussions where required.

The Committee focused the majority of their time on the greatest areas of risk facing the Council in Childrens Services, Adult Social Care and Health, Homelessness and the cost of living in the context of

- Continuing one-year Revenue Support Grant settlement, with annual inflation uplift.
- The cap on council tax increases, reflecting central Government's direction of the confirmed 2.99% for 2024/25, will revert to 1.99%.
- a further 2% Adult Social Care precept in 2024/25 with 1% modelled for future years.
- Uncertainty to future funding due to the delay in 100% Business Rates Retention.
- Reductions in other Government grant funding not reflected in reductions in, and responsibility for related service provision.
- Uncertainty about any future Fair Funding Review.
- A continuing range of increasing costs in order to meet the demands on the Council and maintain key services, particularly in Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Homelessness.

**Recommendations and Reasons**

That Cabinet consider the following recommendations made by the Budget Scrutiny Select Committee.

**Recommendations to Cabinet**

1. that work is undertaken to assess the impact upon all council budgets of dealing with unauthorised encampments (UE).
2. Welcome continuation of current Community Grant Scheme and recommend an increase back to £5,000 per member.
3. Reprofile the Capital programme to ensure that the programme is affordable for the revenue budget.
4. Recommend an expansion of the housing programme for Care Leavers.
5. Recommend that a cross party working group is established to consider contractual arrangements for major projects and the methodology for procurement.

The Select Committee were appraised of commitments and successes of the current administrations during the course of their discussions and wish to congratulate the Cabinet on -

6. Additional Funding provided in the budget for Grass Cutting.
7. The commitment to a new Living Streets programme.
8. Increased involvement of Ward Councillors in discussion in the delivery of Section 106 schemes.
9. Commitment to not implementing Car Park charges where they are not currently in place.
10. The new Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Reason: The recommendations were made after careful consideration of the draft budget proposals and accompanying documentation.

**Alternative options considered and rejected**

Budget Scrutiny is a key part of the development of the 2024/25 budget and Cabinet are required to receive and respond to the recommendations of the Select Committee.

**Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan**

The Select Committee considered the themes within the Corporate Plan to ensure that proposals within the budget and business plans deliver against the council's vision.

**Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:**

Recommendations within the report impact on the 2024/25 budget and subject to the response from Cabinet could have impact on future years budgets within the scope of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy.

**Financial Risks**

There are no financial risks as a direct result of this report.

**Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

There are no environmental implications as a direct result of this report.

**Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:**

*\* When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

N/A

**Appendices**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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**Background papers:**

\*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable) <i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Sign off:**

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Giles Perritt (Assistant Chief Executive)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 21/12/2023											
Scrutiny Chair approval: Councillor Ian Darcy (Chair of Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee)											
Date approved: 12/12/2023											