

Record of Decision

Elected Mayor's Response to Objection to the Revenue Budget 2019/2020

Decision Taker

Elected Mayor on 13 February 2019

Decision

- (i) that the Elected Mayor agrees and accepts the objection in relation to the Revenue Budget and the reasons for it set out below;
- (ii) that, subject to the inclusion of an additional £150,000 for additional wrap around support for Foster Carers to increase the support offered to Foster Carers looking after adolescents with complex needs, to prevent placement breakdowns which will be sustainable through less use of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) or residential placements when placements break down, and an improved strategy for the retention and recruitment of social workers to be funded from a one off allocation from the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) Reserve, the proposals identified for 2019/2020, as set out in the Elected Mayor's Response to Consultation and the Draft Revenue Budget Digest, be approved;
- (iii) that the net revenue expenditure of £111.367m resulting in a Council Tax requirement of £68.688m for 2019/2020 (a 2.99% increase in Council Tax) be approved;
- (iv) that the Dedicated Schools Grant be used in accordance with the Schools Financial Regulations and that the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to make amendments as required when the final figures are confirmed;
- (v) that the proposed Fees and Charges for 2019/2020 be approved;
- (vi) that, in accordance with the requirement of the Local Government Act 2003, the advice given by the Chief Finance Officer with respect to the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the Council's reserves (as set out in the report) be considered and noted; and
- (vii) that it be noted that Brixham Town Council has set its budget for 2019/2020, the resulting precept will be included as part of the Torbay Council budget for Council Tax setting purposes.

Reason for the Decision

The Council's recent Ofsted Monitoring Visit and latest Annual Fostering Reports have identified a number of recommendations in order to increase stability of fostering in Torbay due to a shortage of in-house places. The proposed one off increase in funding for 2019/2020 in this area will help to address concerns raised and put in place strategic options to future stabilise the service and work towards retention of social workers to help to improve the lives of vulnerable children in Torbay. This additional money will be held in reserve pending the development of an agreed action plan with specific and measurable outcomes that will be achieved through this one off funding, which will be approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Elected Mayor and Executive Lead for Children and Housing by mid April 2019.

Elected Mayor's Response to Objection to the Revenue Budget 2019/2020

Implementation

The Elected Mayor's response to the Council's objection will be considered at the Council on 21 February 2019.

Information

At the adjourned Council meeting held on 7 February 2019, the Council formally objected to the Revenue Budget 2019/2010 on the basis that:

There are serious issues facing our communities in Torbay; the levels of poverty in Torbay continue to increase significantly, Torbay has the second highest number of children who are looked after in the country (per head of population), our Children's Services is set to incur a £4 million overspend in the current year which has resulted in a spending freeze on other services across Torbay, so that our built environment and public open space has become even more tired and neglected. Furthermore, the Elected Mayor has failed to identify a clear strategy to stabilise the overspend of Children's Services.

The service particularly needs additional wrap around support for foster carers and an improved strategy for the retention and recruitment of social workers. Therefore, Council object to the Elected Mayor's budget on the basis that it should identify funding of a minimum £150,000 to support working on these specific areas.

In accordance with the Constitution at F2.9, the Council therefore requires the elected Mayor to consider this objection by 14 February 2019 either:

- a) submit a revision of the estimates or amounts as amended by the elected Mayor with the reasons for any amendments made to the estimates or amounts, to the Council for its consideration; or
- b) inform the Council of any disagreement that the elected Mayor has with any of the Council's objections and the elected Mayor's reasons for any such disagreement.

The Elected Mayor considered the recommendation of Council and his proposed response is set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

None

Is this a Key Decision?

Yes – Reference Number: I044270

Does the call-in procedure apply?

No

Elected Mayor's Response to Objection to the Revenue Budget 2019/2020

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None

Published

13 February 2019

Signed: _____
The Elected Mayor of Torbay

Date: 13 February 2019