

201006 Alderholt & Cranborne Ward Dorset Councillor Report for Alderholt Parish Council

Dorset Council Finances

The Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan approved in February 2020 identified a budget gap – including planned savings - of £31m from 21/22 through to 25/26 – of which £7.4m arose in 21/22

Covid has had a huge impact on this and the details are shown below.

	£k
Budget gap from 2020/21 MTFP	7,434
Reduction in tax base growth	1,924
Reduction in business rates	1,000
Change in inflation assumptions on pay, non-pay and income	1,324
Adults Services & Housing 20/21 continuing budget pressures	6,584
Children's Services 20/21 continuing budget pressures	625
Place Services 20/21 continuing budget pressures	2,208
Corporate Services 20/21 continuing budget pressures	294
Corporate Savings not achieved in 20/21	6,392
Adults Services & Housing new budget pressures	1,955
Children's Services new budget pressures	7,142
Place Services new budget pressures	2,730
Corporate Services new budget pressures	2,288
	<u>41,899</u>

The Council has identified £11.9m of Tactical Savings, and a potential £8.2m of Transformational Savings, which will reduce the Budget Gap over the period

Initial Budget Gap	£41.9m
Less: tactical savings	-£11.9m
Less: transformation savings	-£8.2m
Revised Budget Gap	£21.8m

Tactical Savings derive from savings through convergence of IT systems, deleting vacant posts, reduction on staff travel, reduction on leasing office space, savings on contracts by renegotiating.

Transformation Savings derive from a large number of projects which will produce longer term savings, such as:

- Review ways of working for Office based staff
- Review the Asset Management Plan including office space
- Rationalising and integrating IT systems
- Develop BI to support further reviews

A review of the Capital Program will take place during the Autumn

This budget gap cannot be achieved through efficiency alone, and service delivery will be impacted, and priorities are going to be important. We must ensure that the protection of Residents is covered.

The Council is continuing to lobby Government, but we must also grow our income and reduce ongoing costs.

Response to “Planning for the Future” White Paper

1. That delays in house building nationally are not all due to the planning system – local planning authorities do not build houses - but to other factors including market absorption, the homogenous nature of large developments, and reliance on the private sector for infrastructure provision, as identified in the Letwin review. In the last decade, 2.5 million homes were granted planning permission but only 1.5 million were delivered; similarly in 2019, 371,000 homes were given permission but only 241,000 were delivered;
2. That binding national housing targets and removal of the opportunity for people to comment at outline planning application stage on sites allocated for growth in plans will reduce the ability of communities to have input into proposals affecting their local areas, and reduce local democracy;
3. That greater detail is required on how the national housing targets would be derived, including how environmental constraints will be taken into account, and that this must include an element of national planning strategy setting out the aims for how places will grow and the infrastructure needed to support them;
4. That the proposed timescale for the adoption of new style plans is very ambitious bearing in mind the need for the introduction of new primary legislation, the proposed ‘front loading’ of community engagement and the greater level of technical work necessary if growth areas will receive automatic outline planning permission;
5. That there is significant risk to the progress of currently emerging local plans due to the uncertainty around, and scale of, these changes;
6. That if national policies are not to be repeated in local plans, they need to carry the same weight in decision making as development plan policies. Some local ‘development management policies’ will still be necessary to set out local mechanisms and approaches to addressing national policy issues – for example local solutions to addressing indirect effects of development on protected habitats;

7. That there is no reference to what if any effect these changes are intended to have on minerals and waste local plans, how policies and site allocations for minerals and waste would be applied under the zoning system and how minerals safeguarding can be achieved;
8. That while the support for good design and the publication of a national design code are welcomed, it is important that these focus not only on what places look like, but how they work for those living and working in them. Masterplanning also needs to consider infrastructure provision and mitigation of impacts on habitats, flood risk, heritage and landscape.
9. That the replacement of the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning agreements with a single levy is not likely to generate sufficient funding for the infrastructure and affordable housing that is needed, particularly bearing in mind the exemptions proposed. We would support the ring fencing of funding for affordable housing to ensure that this is not reduced;
10. That while an increased reliance on digital methods of engagement and involvement may well attract a wider audience to comment on planning proposals, it will potentially disadvantage older people and those in more deprived areas who may have less access to digital means of communication.