

Comments from the Policy Overview Committees on the Cabinet's budget proposals.

As part of the Constitution (Budget and Policy Framework Procedure), Policy Overview Committees have a role to review the Cabinet's draft budget proposals, which were set out at Cabinet on 10 December 2020 and then to submit their comments to the Cabinet for consideration before the final budget is recommended to full Council.

At Policy Overview Committee meetings in January 2021 consideration was given to reports which provided details of draft budget proposals relating to the remit of each committee. The Corporate Services, Commerce and Communities Policy Overview Committee then reviewed the comments submitted at their meeting on 3 February 2021 and agreed to submit the combined set of comments to Cabinet as set out below:

	Comments
Corporate Services, Commerce & Communities 12 January 2021 & 3 February 2021	<p>The Committee notes and congratulates officers on their ongoing work in delivering a balanced budget across the Council year after year, particularly during the challenging year we have just experienced.</p> <p>With particular note to the areas within this Committee's remit, it is pleasing to see the BID process being revisited across a number of departments to continually look at ways that processes can be improved and delivered. This includes the use of technological advancements alongside automation and robotics in terms of software developments. This is a positive and forward-looking step that the Council is taking, which not only delivers savings, but also improves efficiencies in services.</p>
Social Care, Housing & Public Health – 19 January 2021	<p>The Social Care, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee commends officers on the budget proposals, maintaining services for residents, with appropriate contingency provision for service pressures. Proposals for priority growth within Domestic Abuse are welcomed, as are proposals within the capital programme for autism respite accommodation and the investment in general needs housing within the HRA. The Committee also welcomes the approach to innovation, delivering service transformation.</p> <p>A question in relation to budget setting was raised, with reference to the impact of the pandemic. Officers advised that the base budgets and contingency is set using the same approach as all other years and any impact that Covid-19 may have on the base budgets for 2021/22 will be managed using the Council's Covid-19 contingency budget. This is a clearer way of understanding the base position and the distinct impact of the pandemic.</p>
Residents', Education & Environmental Services 27 January 2021	<p>The Committee welcomes the budget report which contains an ambitious investment plan despite challenging and uncertain times.</p>

	<p>The Committee acknowledges the need to raise Council Tax, however, the Committee is reassured to note that the 4.8% increase to be raised is no more than necessary to protect front line services.</p> <p>The Administration's policy of sound financial management has continued to protect residents in this budget proposal, with reserves being utilised that have been built up in previous years. The policy of zero-based reviews has also resulted in many departments coming in under budget, which has kept costs under control.</p> <p>With the concerning increase in domestic violence due to the pandemic, the Committee warmly welcomes the £50k of new funding for domestic abuse initiatives.</p> <p>Due to the uncertainty of the last year and indeed the near future, the Committee also endorses the Administration's cautious approach in allocating £1,038k of priority growth earmarked reserves for any new and emergency issues that may arise in the new financial year.</p> <p>With health and wellbeing being placed under strain during the pandemic, the Committee welcomes the continued investment program to rebuild/refurbish sports clubs, a renewed library refurbishment programme, provision for investment in youth infrastructure, and a commitment to build a new leisure centre in the Yiewsley and West Drayton area.</p>
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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Minutes of the Policy Overview Committee meetings](#)
