

Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee

Feedback from the all Member budget event held on 26 January 2022

Summary

An informal all Member event was held on 26th January 2022 to outline the Council Plan and 2022/23 budget. The event was well attended and provided Members with the opportunity to raise any issues or clarifying points ahead of the budget being agreed at Cabinet on 1st February and approved at the full Council meeting on 18th February.

All the points raised were answered by Cabinet Members or senior officers.

Summary of feedback from all Members of the County Council

- A number of Members expressed concern over the adequacy of the provision for inflation, pay and price increases included within the budget. There was concern expressed that the inflation and price increases included were overly optimistic as they are lower than the current ONS rates being reported. Members sought clarification that there were review processes in place through the year to enable revisions to take place if necessary.
- Also raised issue of the growing gap between inflation and pay rises and the effect this may have on the Council's workforce ie whether staff will leave their professions to seek better paid jobs elsewhere which will affect the Council's vacancy rates and impact front-line service provision.
- Sought clarification of the impact of refugees and asylum seekers on the budget.
- Requested information on the SEND budget and the investment required in this service.
- Questioned whether the level of reserves held and the assets we have should be reviewed in order to meet growing needs and maximise service provision.
- Requested that the Council review how our assets are used in order to support residents and contribute to climate change eg ground source heating.
- Sought clarification on the 1.5% increase in the tax base and the affect of developments on Council services across the county.

Contact Officer

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