



Northamptonshire County Council

Chairs and Clerks of Parish Councils

Please ask for: Linda Weller
Tel: 01604 366982
Our ref: HS/ljw
Your ref:
Date: 18th December 2017

Dear Chairs and Clerks,

I wanted to write to let you know that today we are publishing our full set of budget proposals for 2018/19. This budget sees a further £34.3m taken out of public services in the county in addition to the £376m already saved since 2010.

These proposals represent a fundamental re-scoping of our public service offer as we direct all our resources to fulfil our statutory duties at the expense of significant reductions in our non-statutory, discretionary services. The proposals can be found at www.northamptonshire.gov.uk.

The reality is that the way we as a county are currently funded means we can now barely afford to pay for those statutory services we are required to deliver by law, as growth in demand and cost continues to grow at an astonishing rate. It would help us if, in your role as community leaders in your parishes, you can help communicate to local people the scale of this growth and challenge in our county.

For example, in children's services we have an additional 200 children in our care compared to just three years ago. In addition to this, there are increasingly complex needs among children receiving care which need to be met.

In addition there is an accelerating growth in costs of our older population where we have seen a 25% increase in the cost for care for the over-85s in the last three years. The number of people aged over 65 will grow by 28% by 2024, meaning that growth in cost and demand will be sustained.

To help cope with these pressures, today's proposals include an additional £24.6m into adult social care budgets and £11m into children's services. Of course, though with no additional help from the government, this required investment comes at a heavy cost. To be able to keep pace with this significant growth in costs we simply have no option but to severely reduce our universal and 'discretionary' service offer.

Cllr Heather Smith, MCIPD
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Northamptonshire
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The full set of proposals, including those published in October, therefore includes a significant programme of library closures, reductions in highways and winter maintenance programmes, far-reaching reductions in trading standards, and the cessation of bus subsidies.

I know just how painful some of these proposals are for your local communities and, as we have said before, many of these are measures we simply would not pursue in any other circumstance. However, the lack of adequate funding and the soaring costs of our statutory services leave us very little choice.

I urge you to review our full set of budget proposals and engage with us on how we can better work together to continue the best serve the public within the financial context described above.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H Smith', written in a cursive style.

Cllr Heather Smith CMIPD
Leader
Northamptonshire County Council