

First of all - may I wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

Apologies that my report was a little late, but I have been flat out finalising our budget for 2024/25 - which as I am sure you can imagine is quite challenging. The final draft budget is due to be published on Wednesday 17th January, ahead of it going to our Performance & Finance scrutiny committee on 24th. It then goes for signing off at Public Cabinet on 30th January, before going to full council for final approval on Friday February 16th. All these are meetings open to the public. They are also webcast live as well as being recorded so that they can be accessed in the future.

For 2024/25 our gross spend will be in the region of £2.0bn and our net revenue budget will be just over £761M. Of that, 63% goes on both adults and children's services. £47m of that revenue expenditure goes on highways, plus of course £60m of capital expenditure, - nearly half of which is additional funding - over and above government grants - that we are putting into highways.

I think the key point is that the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement provided us with very little additional funding to address the continuing pressures, particularly for social care - both children and adults. Although the Government did announce an increase in core funding for LA's of around 6.5%, nearly 4.5% of that is predicated on the assumption that we raise CT by the maximum allowed, which is 4.99% (2.99% for core services plus 2% for adult social care). We therefore have little choice other than to propose raising CT by that amount, which equates to an average rise of £81.54 per year - or £1.57 per week - for an average Band D taxpayer.

Here to help - cost of living - I know I mentioned this in October, but just as a reminder - especially with this very cold weather - WSCC has dedicated web pages to provide people with the latest help, advice and practical support if they are facing cost of living pressures. Please go to [Advice and information pages](#) for more info - and please spread the word. Often those in need are too proud to ask for help, so if you know or even suspect anyone who might be struggling perhaps you could point them in our direction. Our Community Hub is still running - there to help and support people.

Westhampnett Amenity site - just a reminder that the booking system for the site goes live on 12th February. The website is www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/waste-and-recycling/recycling-and-waste-prevention/recycling-centres/book-to-recycle-booking-system/ - or more simply just google 'West Sussex book to recycle'.

Local Matters:

Charlton 20mph Scheme

I have heard nothing further since your discussions at the last meeting, so I just wanted to check if an application has been submitted yet.

SW Pumping

I received a complaint from a resident of Bankside complaining about the noise coming from the SW pumps. I have emailed SW to ask if there was anything they could do and they have responded saying they will contact the resident directly. I have asked the resident to update me once that meeting has taken place.

Finally, please don't forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news.

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

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