

COUNCIL

25 JANUARY 2024

NOTICE OF MOTION 2

Proposed by: Councillor Moultrie

Seconded by: Councillor Green

Local Authorities across the country such as Cardiff are currently preparing their annual budgets for 2024/25.

After 13 years of public sector austerity by the Conservative-led UK Government, exacerbated in recent years by the continued impact of Brexit, the long tail of the Pandemic, rampant inflation, and stagnant growth, Councils now face unprecedented levels of demand but wholly insufficient funding. Such is the severity of the situation, that several councils in England have issued Section 114 notices to severely curtail day-to-day spending.

Cardiff Council has faced a cumulative budget gap of over £300 million since 2010, and prudent, decisive action has been needed to protect the Council's financial resilience, whilst still delivering an ambitious Stronger, Fairer, Greener vision.

In particular, the Council notes:

- The continued improvements delivered within our schools, which has seen a dramatic reduction in the number of schools in Estyn Monitoring, NEET figures held at near historically low levels, exam results now comfortably above the Welsh average, and the sustained investment over 11 years into both our schools and the Education estate.
- The progress made in support of children who are looked after, in particular the careful expansion of kinship care, and the delivery of the accommodation strategy. This work is improving the Council's ability to home and care for our most vulnerable young people closer to home.
- The rebuilding of our Youth Service capacity, with budget growth across multiple years, and proposed protection to the service in the forthcoming financial year, enabling the service to build on the success of initiatives like the Cardiff Commitment and the UNICEF Child-Friendly City award to ensure all our young people, regardless of background, can benefit from the opportunities our city offers.
- The pioneering partnership work between our Social Services teams and the NHS which enables timely discharges from hospital to mitigate against Winter

Pressures. This partnership ensures our older people - particularly those with conditions such as dementia - get the specialised care they need, and which is supporting people to live independently at home, with a better quality of life, for longer.

- The success of our award winning Council House building programme, which is transforming lives and communities in every part of Cardiff, and which is also supporting the delivery – at scale – of innovative and rapid housing solutions to help address the latest homelessness crisis affecting all cities.
- All of this is and more is delivered with the Council setting amongst the lowest Council Tax levels in Wales.

Nevertheless, despite the relative protection afforded by the Welsh Government to local authorities, the latest budget round leaves the Council facing significant challenges , and difficult decisions, the results of which residents will feel keenly.

Therefore this Council resolves to

1. Condemn the continued attack on local government finances by the Conservative UK Government, and the detrimental impact this has on the provision of public services;
2. Call on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to announce additional resources targeted at local authorities in his March budget.
3. Endorse the proposed prioritisation of Education and Social Services, as set out within the 2024/25 Budget Update report to Cabinet, but notes any further cuts to local authority funding will leave many non-statutory areas of Council spending essentially “on life-support” until a change of direction is secured at UK Government level.
4. Welcome efforts by Welsh Government to protect Welsh local authorities as far as possible, and calls on the future First Minister to continue this approach, with a particular focus on supporting preventative services.