

County Councillor Report, January 2024

1. The County Council, like virtually all other local authorities, is experiencing increasing costs in general and in three expenditure areas in particular. Adult Social Care, Child Care Placements and Home To School Transport are seeing costs escalate, resulting in budget pressures which the Cabinet are addressing as a priority.

The Council is determined to not only maintain key services but to continue to provide the enhanced services which it has committed to do. It doesn't help when the government fail to maintain council grants in line with inflation and limit the increases that Council Tax can be increased by each year. For example, the Chancellor of the Exchequer can increase national taxes at will, to ensure "a balanced national budget", but local authorities are limited to a 3% rise in Council Tax each year, at a time when inflation has been running at over 10%.

- There is a 2% ring fenced increase for Adult Social Care also allowed.

I will keep you updated as the Council prepares its Budget for 2024/25.

2. The County Council has secured £1.1million to help speed up hospital discharges, boost social care provision and prevent avoidable hospital admissions. Local Councils with Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) and identified by NHS England as experiencing challenges with urgent and emergency care, were invited to put forward proposals for access to a £40million government fund.

Worcestershire County Council were successful and will use the additional money to buy more services aimed at keeping people out of hospital as well as more packages for care at home.

3. A new bursary to aid young people with special education needs or disabilities is being made available by the County Council. The £1,000 Supported Internship Bursary will be for those partaking in the Supported Internship Programme. The fund will aid learners in acquiring work essentials such as PPE, uniforms, IT equipment and travel support.

The Supported Internship Bursary demonstrates the County Council's determination to fostering the growth and development of the county's future workforce and championing employment inclusion.

David Chambers

County Councillor, Tenbury Division