

Points made by Cllr Crossley at Cabinet Feb 3
(16) Budget 2010/11

- The Liberal Democrats know this budget round is difficult and welcome the Council Tax level being set within the Government's capping limit of 3% rise. The Liberal Democrats would also not breach Government capping guidelines. We are not setting an alternative budget proposal this year because of difficulties in accessing all the data and plans we would need to, to be able to set an alternative.
- Much is being made of the various funds available for one-off spending and we feel this is an attempt to distract attention from the various cuts in service and increases in charges and fees coming up.
- Some of the one-off funding is particularly welcome; should be used for invest to save, to soften impacts of future pressures and support services for the future
- We are delighted that the Cabinet is finally bring this scheme forward for food waste collection – £460k is from WRAP thanks to the work and suggestion of Cllr Symonds; LD plans had been to bring it in during 2008; better late than never.
- Some funding is a bit of a mystery - £250k for Olympics promotion – how will this be used – will there be an attempt to get match funding from the private sector? £3m for affordable housing – what will this be used for? We are presuming this is for Bath Western Riverside and welcome this. We would also point out that there are empty properties and properties over shops that can be brought back into housing use.
- We would like assurances that the money earmarked for Highways will also include cycling and pedestrian priorities. We are concerned that the planned cuts in this department will reduce the influence of cycling and pedestrian issues.
- There is curiosity of 96k from CT collection fund and £372k from headroom – to be considered by Cabinet. The budget should in future set realistic levels Council Tax collection and realistic income levels from areas such as car parking should be used in the budget setting process.
- We are concerned about “unidentified savings” in adult and children’s and would like more detail about these savings
- We are shocked that ‘at risk’ notices were delivered to staff during the festive season – even if there was a statutory timetable, this was certainly no way to treat the Council’s loyal and hard working staff
- We note that £2m set aside for restructuring, redundancy, retirement .
- We believe that promised improvements (such as the recommendations of the street cleansing task and finish group) will be difficult to deliver with a reduced and possibly demoralised staff