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Budget Aims and Ambitions

Bath and North East Somerset Council, in partnership with other local public sector agencies has developed an ambitious 2020 vision for the area. This vision, sets out the Councils overarching aspirations for the future.

‘Bath and North East Somerset will be internationally renowned as a beautifully inventive and entrepreneurial 21st century place with a strong social purpose and a spirit of wellbeing, where everyone is invited to think big – a ‘connected’ area ready to create an extraordinary legacy for future generations’

From this, the Cabinet have identified three core aims and six key priorities for the Council to focus on:

Core Aims:

Ensuring the Council:

- Is efficient and well run;
- Invests in the future of the area; and
- Puts the interests of residents first

Key Priorities:

- Tackling waste and increasing efficiency
- Improving transport
- Delivering new homes and jobs
- Investing in young people
- Supporting cleaner, greener and healthier communities
- Promoting choice and independence for older people.

These areas will guide Council activity and budget planning over the next year; ensuring that resources are allocated in a robust and sustainable manner and enable the Council to invest in the things that matter most to local people.

Below are some examples of how the budget will deliver the Cabinet’s commitments:

Tackling waste and increasing efficiency

- Delivering internal organizational savings and improving financial efficiencies to produce over £5 million worth of efficiency savings.
- Exploring more opportunities for sharing services and collaborating with other organisations, including health, other public services and local authorities.
- Generating over £3 million of new income in 2016/17 by innovative means, such as:
 - More weddings and events in a variety of local places
 - Growing income from the Council’s commercial estate
 - Growing the visitor economy, with more markets, pop-ups and events

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- Developing the CCTV service to operate on a more commercial footing
- Increasing income from our Heritage estate and assets

Improving local transport

- Funding to support the implementation of Transport Strategies for Bath, Keynsham, Chew and Somer Valleys in order to tackle congestion and improve local transport;
- Investing an additional £500k in highway maintenance, over and above the £3.6 million granted by Government, in order to better maintain the condition of our local roads;
- Continued support of local buses, including additional investment through the Better Bus Fund;
- Increasing cycling opportunities and encouraging participation;
- Support for phase 1 of the MetroWest project to enable more frequent local rail services to Keynsham and Bath.

Delivering new homes and jobs

- Investing more than £3.2 million in new affordable housing schemes throughout the area, including support for extra-care housing and a shared-housing initiative for young people, as well as affordable housing schemes in rural and urban areas;
- Improving connectivity through continued support for rural broadband and investing £2.25 million investment in the Digital B&NES project to enable the provision of ultra and superfast broadband to local businesses;
- Supporting local traders through investment in improved Wayfinding;
- Up to a £30 million investment to support Bath Quays delivery, enabling the creation of thousands of local jobs whilst optimising a return for the Council;

Investing in our young people

- Protection for front-line children and youth services including children's centres, child protection services and schools.
- Providing £200k to improve and expand facilities at Riverside Youth Hub.
- Investing over £6 million in new and improved school buildings in order to modernise facilities for local school children and support parental choice;
- Providing £150k to upgrade and modernise children's play areas throughout the district.

Supporting cleaner, greener and healthier communities

- Protecting front line environmental services including street cleansing, with no further public toilet closures;
- Providing £60k to tackle the urban gull problem and enable the delivery of the new Gull Strategy;
- Investing in new leisure facilities in Bath and Keynsham to support an increase in participation in physical activities;
- Providing £50k to upgrade and replace old and damaged litter bins and benches.

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Promoting greater choice and independence for older people

- Protecting front-line adult health and social care services with additional funding enabled through the new Social Care precept.
- Investing over £1 million in Disabled Facilities Grants to enable home adaptations that support greater independence for elderly and vulnerable residents;
- Protection of funding for advice services delivered by the local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Further details on the context and strategic drivers of the budget are set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy 2016-2020. This strategy sets the Council's direction of travel over the next four years enabling it to shape its business so that it is able to deliver the Cabinets manifesto commitments in 2016/17.