

Conservative group budget proposal for 2019/20

One of the reasons why people choose to live and work in South Cambridgeshire is that it is still a largely rural area with over 100 villages, and over 90 per cent of the land is not built on.

The proposals for carbon-neutral building put forward by the administration to be achieved by 2050 are welcome and were supported by the Conservative group in council. This amendment to the 2019 budget seeks to address a more immediate environmental blight on our villages and communities – flytipping. The council will additionally invest to ensure that the condition and environmental wellbeing of our villages is enhanced by regular street-cleaning, and a programme of community environmental initiatives such as litter-picking, waterways improvements, planting and recycling.

Flytipping has risen markedly – 166 reported incidents in the first six months of 2018 compared with 116 in the same period 2017. Household waste, electrical goods and tyres are the main areas of increase. It is almost all on roads and footpaths and bridleways. The numbers of prosecutions is practically zero.

The district budgets have considerable amounts of money in the specific business rates earmarked reserve, derived from the retained business rates pilot that ran for three years under the Conservative administration.

Specifically

1. Fly-tipping

The council will respond to and clear away fly-tipping within two working days and increase its ability to investigate and crack-down on fly-tipping offenders. Once an area gets a reputation as a suitable spot for fly-tipping, it accumulates. Clearing away quickly stops that – but to be effective the council also needs resources to investigate and prosecute. The council will use drone technology to accurately identify reports and verify with complainants.

The cost for this would be £120k in revenue costs (vehicle plus two staff) and £100k capital for new vehicle.

An additional investigation officer at £30k with on costs.

Drone costs – £50k

The council would commit to a new protocol with Cambridgeshire Constabulary to share resources and information to secure prosecutions. The council will set a target to monitor effectiveness in this area.

2. Street cleaning

The council currently sweeps kerbsides twice a year dependent on resources. In future under this proposal the council will carry out street sweeping in the major villages every quarter and in all other villages three times a year.

An additional sweeper with driver would be needed – with the driver trained and qualified to additionally support environment waste collection services to ensure best use of resources.

The cost for this would be £90k revenue cost (vehicle plus driver) and £120k capital for new vehicle.

3. The community environment initiatives officer costs would be met by not recruiting an additional policy officer to support the environmental advisory committee but using that money for this post. The grants advisory committee budget would be weighted so that bids for environmental improvement carried a greater chance of success.

Peter Topping

Councillor for Whittlesford ward