

SCDC LABOUR GROUP BUDGET SUGGESTIONS

1. Council Tax and Safeguards for most disadvantaged residents.
We are not proposing a freeze but in the light of significant cost of living increases coming our way we feel it would be useful to make sure that all those on low incomes are protected as much as possible and to make sure they are receiving all the rebates and reliefs they are entitled to.
Given the apparent success of the Benefit Income Maximisation Officer role might this scheme be scaled up to 1.5 or 2 positions?
2. Cultural Strategy Development
Given the ongoing discussions involving Officers, Members and now involving local Cultural sector assets (eg. Wysing Arts Centre) it would be helpful to set an initial budget line to take this work forward following the next key mtg on March 3. Without any cash identified it will be difficult for funders such as Arts Council England to consider any Project Fund application from SCDC. The kind of partnership we are facilitating in these current decisions is precisely the kind that ACE state they want to support in their current 10 year strategy, so there is an excellent opportunity if a budget line can be identified we can multiply it by several times with funding from outside of Council.
3. Care/Nursing Home Provision
This is a significant and growing issue. At the moment care provision is largely done by private providers which is expensive and not necessarily efficient and also often lacks transparency in the quality of delivery. There appears significant scope for local authorities, in partnership or alongside co-operative models of care that are emerging to deliver a high quality and cost efficient care service based on an identification of local need and involvement of those who require the care.
Www.valleyare.coop is a model of domiciliary care provision that Cllr Clayton has contact with in Kirklees. He could make an introduction if that would be helpful to explore potential of initiating something similar here.
South Cambs already has well run and warden supervised sheltered housing schemes and it could build on that experience and expertise. The proposal at this stage is to allocate a sum of £10,000 to fund a feasibility survey to identify how this could be done and the practicalities involved.
4. Green infrastructure
Borrowing from the public works fund now appears to have been widened to allow local authorities to engage in a wider variety of local investment initiatives than was possible before and the opportunity to invest directly in local renewable energy schemes would appear to merit exploration especially as the household cost of energy is expected to soar in coming months. Clearly this needs to be handled carefully and the proposal is to earmark £10,000 for a feasibility project to investigate the practicalities and whether such schemes would pay for themselves. Other authorities have gone down this route with success and the feasibility study would explore their experience and the relevance to SCDC
5. Local composting
Some years ago an initiative was undertaken to encourage villages to appoint a local composter and provide a local site where green waste could be composted and used locally rather than using the green bin collection service. It is not clear what happened to this initiative but it appears appropriate to revive it now and undertake a pilot scheme in one of

our villages. I would anticipate a sum of £2,000 for this purpose. It may of course be possible to use existing staff resources for this purpose in which case there would be no cost.

6. Conservation grants

Many years ago the DC provided contributions to owners of listed and important buildings in our villages in order to improve the quality of workmanship and repair and restoration of these buildings. It does not appear that there is now a designated fund for this purpose and any grant application would have to come from the community grant scheme which is a pretty watered down way of looking after our important village buildings and I would like to propose a sum of £10,000 for a designated conservation grant scheme which would also include the opportunity to restore lost architectural detail in conservation areas in our village high streets where the building is not necessarily listed (cast iron railings, reinstatement of traditional sash windows etc) I have noticed a deterioration in the quality of the work in our conservation areas over the last 10 years or so which is why we are making this proposal. The preference would be, however, to seek this fund from savings elsewhere in the planning budget rather than create an additional expenditure