



Fairford Town Council comments on CDC Budget and MTFS 2020.

Fairford Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Budget and Financial Strategy

- Neither the consultation webpage nor the leaflets provide links to documentation on the complete budget – Without this, there is a concern that the validity of conclusions drawn from responses to the consultation will be questionable.
- Reduction in funding from Central Government is clearly a major risk.
- What are the proposed annual budgets for 2020/1 for each Service Group as set out in the Performance reports?
- We would reiterate our concern expressed last year about capital/infrastructure expenditure being focused excessively on Cirencester to the detriment of other Principal Settlements, and the potential impact on Climate Change policy through increased car travel required to access facilities.
- There would seem to be a danger of business rates income falling short of expectations unless appropriate positive action is taken to support the continued viability of smaller Principal Settlements such as Fairford. There is a similar risk if Government intervention to help town centres is not adequately funded.
- The loss of economic activity and reduction in ‘self-containment’ in smaller centres is likely to have a negative impact on Climate Change objectives.
- Apart from a statement that it “will link in with other Council priorities of climate change, social housing provision and economic development”, it is unclear exactly what is proposed under the ‘Commercialisation Strategy’ and how the expenditure and benefits will be spread across the District to support local economies, some of which are under serious threat. We understand that plans are still being developed, and that the Council may be considering taking a stake in new employment land or other business/commercial facilities as part of this initiative. This would be very welcome if it helps to maintain or increase the ratio of local employment to population. However, it is recognised that Town/Parish Councils may have a part to play in identifying opportunities that may be of benefit, e.g. through Neighbourhood Plans or residents’ ideas.
- If CDC were to support an ‘outreach’ provision from the Corinium Museum in Fairford and other outlying centres (where a significant amount of the Iron Age etc. artefacts have been derived from as the result of recent developments) this could be of benefit to both these other centres and the Corinium Museum, through the additional publicity this would generate.
- Fairford Sports Centre (passed over to Farmor’s School a few years ago with only a limited-term financial arrangement) is at risk as community facility unless a community-led scheme can be agreed – This has a potential impact on Climate Change and Health/Well-being.
- At present there is inadequate provision for meeting statutory obligations in respect of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, identified as a risk area in the CDC Historic Environment Strategy, although we understand that the Council could review this as part of a review of the Planning function. While we ourselves are planning to do a large part of the data gathering and drafting required for this, allocating some CDC resources to this in order to complete the job should be of benefit in helping to secure the future of tourism and associated economic benefits in the District, as well as providing a more climate compatible alternative to foreign air-travel holidays.
- Proposed expenditure on new officers/support will not produce immediate benefits.