

# CLLR ALEXANDER MAUGHAN LINCOLNSHIRE CC UPDATE – JANUARY 2023



## County Council budget for 2023/24

The County Council is setting its budget and spending priorities for the year ahead. A draft budget was proposed by the Executive in January and currently subject to scrutiny from Councillors before being voted on at the February full council meeting.

Below are some of the key figures from the budget:

## Revenue Budget 2023/24

- Revenue budget - £595million will be sent on delivering services in Lincolnshire next year.
- How it will be spent - £177million Adult Care and Wellbeing, £97million on Children's Services, £47million on Highways maintenance, £22million Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- Proposed £9m additional spend on Highway maintenance next year.
- £65million of cost pressures – increasing demand in adult care and children's services, local government pay award/staff pay increases, impact of inflation on materials and contracts.
- Savings of £11million from smarter working, additional income and efficiencies. Despite cost pressures the County Council continues drive value for money for local taxpayers.
- Council Tax – proposals provide a 2% Adult Care precept increase and 1% general council tax (3%). This is for illustrative purposes only. Councillors are set to decide the county precept next month.
- Council tax increase of 3% leaves a deficit of £10m to be funded from reserves. The council can increase council tax up to 5% before triggering a referendum, following a relaxation of rules by the Government.
- Impact of Council tax rises on reserves and a Band D property:
  1. Option A - 3% increase - £10.3million deficit – cost of county precept on a Band D £1,475
  2. Option B - 4% increase - £6.9million deficit – cost of county precept on a Band D £1,489
  3. Option C - 5% increase - £3.4million deficit – cost of county precept on a Band D £1,504
- The County Council maintains a Financial Volatility Reserve to cover cost pressures and protect key services under unforeseen financial circumstances. The current balance of this fund is £46million. It is recommended that a level of £40-50million is maintained, as local government funding for future years remains uncertain.
- How is the council funded next year – council tax (3% increase) £359million, business rates £131million, social care grants £56million, other government grants £39million

The County Council continues to deliver a balanced budget, despite cost pressures from inflation and demand led care services, and whilst keeping Lincolnshire council tax rates at one of the lowest in the country and protecting key frontline services.

The number of other local authorities facing severe financial difficulties is growing, with Thurrock Council recently being placed under a government section 114 that restricts council spending.

## Capital budget

- £131million will be spent on capital projects in 2023/24 to improve and develop infrastructure in Lincolnshire, including new roads, schools and flood defences.
- £428million is budgeted to be spent over future years on capital projects in Lincolnshire. The funding for capital projects comes from council borrowing, government grants and S106 developer contributions.

### **Phase two of Grantham bypass project now open**

Work on phases two and three of Grantham Southern Relief Road continued through December.

Phase two, being the new A1 trunk road and B1174 roundabout, was opened to traffic at the end of December following installation of the final linings and signage. This marks another significant milestone in the £133million project to improve traffic and congestion around Grantham.

Phase three, which links the B1174 roundabout to the A52 at Old Somerby, continues to progress. The bridge extension identified last year is expected to cost an additional £15million. It is still anticipated that the third and final phase of the bypass will be complete and open to traffic in 2025.

Funding for Grantham Bypass comes from £33million of government grants with the balance forward funded by Lincolnshire County Council, and recovered as far as possible through developer contributions.

Current traffic restrictions and closures in place:

- Lane restrictions around the B1174 roundabout to facilitate the construction of the haul route
- Whalebone Lane closed
- Lane restrictions around Somerby Hill roundabout

### **County Council Household Support Fund**

The County Council has received a further £5.46m to support households in Lincolnshire with the cost of living. The funding comes in addition to £10m already received and distributed in 2020.

LCC is working with District Councils to distribute funds to those who need it. Over 50% of the funding is being distributed through schools, to children and families eligible for free school meals, with a further 25% being distributed to households in receipt of housing benefit from the District Council.

Further guidance on cost of living support can be found at <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/council-councillors/cost-of-living>

### **Avian Flu: take steps to protect your birds**

Cases of avian influenza (bird flu) H5N1 have been confirmed in poultry at several premises in East Lindsey, Boston, North Kesteven and South Kesteven.

A national housing order is now in place across England making it a legal requirement for all bird-keepers to keep all captive birds indoors and follow strict biosecurity measures.

If you suspect any type of avian influenza in poultry or captive birds you must report it immediately by calling the Defra Rural Services Helpline on 03000 200 301.

### **Alexander Maughan**

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