

Annex 6h: Response Cllr Pritchard

Dear leader,

Having studied the budget proposals outlined in the Cabinet report dated [November 13th](#) 2019, we would like to summarise some of the proposals and our own amendments we feel should be considered following the publication of the local government settlement. We have taken into account the views of members of the public through e mails and conversations we have received as local councillors in response to the budget. Also, we note the views expressed by the cross party Policy and Resources scrutiny committee when they considered the budget in December 2019.

The main areas we would like to highlight is as follows;

- * Individual Schools Budget £2.060m - Reinstate the proposed £2.060m reduction in individual schools budget.
- * School dinners £82k - Freeze the cost of school dinners to help compensate all families with children impacted by wider austerity measures.
- * Meals on Wheels 5k - Freeze Meals on Wheels costs to help protect the most vulnerable. Cover the costs by increasing meal prices in the Council canteen by 4.5% to 5% (in line with P&R Scrutiny recommendation).
- * Voluntary Sector reductions 80k - Reinstate the proposed cuts to allow the voluntary sector to flourish.
- * Reduction in carriageway budget £514 - We ask for this budget to be maintained.
- * Reduction in cleansing staff £145k - Reinstate the proposed six cleansing jobs to be lost to ensure service levels are retained.
- * Closure of Trehir £15k - Review the proposed closure in light of public concern.
- * Council Tax - Reduce the proposed 6.95% increase to below 5%

We believe the local government settlement allows for less cuts and a lower than proposed Council Tax increase. Our proposals are strong on protecting the schools budget. The Local Authorities ambitious 21st Century Schools Programme will pump millions of pounds into

new school buildings and refurbishments. It is important that we strive to ensure as much funding as possible is directed towards our future generations.

Our proposals to freeze the cost of school meals and Meals on Wheels will ensure that families with children and the most vulnerable are protected with a real - terms cut to the cost of meals (taking inflation into account).

Retention of the voluntary sector budget will ensure help, support and advice will be provided to the vast numbers of unsung heroes in our communities who work to improve their local area. The retention of funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau will help protect the most vulnerable.

Highways and cleansing are services the public want protected, but we do understand that ever diminishing reductions to the Council budget have resulted in difficult decisions being made in previous years. As local councillors we continue to support recycling and safe ways to deposit waste. Civic amenity sites play an important role in this respect.

Finally, Council Tax. We do not believe it would be wise to freeze Council Tax or reduce to levels which would leave Council budgets dry in future years. With every per cent of Council Tax reduced, around 400 to 500k of spending cuts would have to be implemented. The public have endured ten years of austerity and the settlement could well be worse in 2021 / 22. We believe a modest reduction to the originally proposed Council Tax increase strikes the right balance to ensure less service cuts are considered in future years.

Many thanks,

Cllr James Pritchard
Morgan Jones Ward

Cllr Shayne Cook
Morgan Jones Ward

Cllr James Pritchard

Cynghorydd Sir - Morgan Jones | County Councillor - Morgan Jones
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Caerffili | Caerphilly County Borough Council
