

Budget 2023/24

The County Council budget for 2023/24 was approved at a lengthy full council meeting on 16th February. The budget sees significant increases in spending on services that support vulnerable children, young people, and adults in response to rising demand for those services. A band D householder will see the DCC proportion of their council tax increase by £1.49 per week.

The fact is though, the council tax rise, plus funding we receive from the Government, will not balance our budget book. Spending this much on priority services to meet growing demand means having to make savings in the region of £47.5 million from elsewhere to balance the books. We need to make the most of every pound we spend.

Most of those savings are earmarked to come from adult social care, and last week we launched consultations, putting forward proposals on ways that we could make savings in some specific services. We're contacting the people who used those services directly, to ask them what they think.

The approved service revenue budget targets for the 2023/24 financial year are set out in the table below.

	2022/23 Adjusted Base Budget *	Inflation and National Living Wage	Other Pressures	Savings, alternative funding and additional income	2023/24 Target Budget	Net change	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Integrated Adult Social Care	311,968	29,535	29,999	(32,200)	339,302	27,334	8.8%
Childrens and Young Peoples Futures	176,205	9,585	32,376	(9,563)	208,603	32,398	18.4%
Public Health, Communities & Prosperity	20,308	874	617	(404)	21,395	1,087	5.4%
Corporate Services	42,213	4,470	623	(2,458)	44,848	2,635	6.2%
Climate Change, Environment & Transport	79,117	7,037	214	(4,468)	81,900	2,783	3.5%
Service budgets total	629,811	51,501	63,829	(49,093)	696,048	66,237	10.5%

The approved Budget Book can be found here [Budget Book Master 2023-24.pdf \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

Seaton to Colyford Multi use trail

A report is being presented to cabinet next week (8 March) recommending approval to construct the new off-road section of the multi-use trail (stop line way) from the rear of properties at The Saltings, following the field boundaries and then connecting to Marsh Lane and onto the Wetlands.

Vegetation is already being cleared with construction planned for summer 2023 and planting and landscaping taking place in October. Planning permission was granted for the improvements in 2011 and it has been the long-term ambition of DCC, (and numerous local members along the way!) to complete the route between Seaton & Colyford to provide a safe and continuous trail that promotes walking, wheeling, and cycling as well as the wider benefits for local tourism and accessibility to the Wetlands. Link to full cabinet report below.

[Seaton to Colyford Multi-Use Trail - Final.pdf \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

Welcome to new DCC Chief Executive Donna Manson

In February Donna Manson joined DCC as our new Chief Executive. A message from Donna can be viewed here: [Hello, from our new Chief Executive - news \(devon.gov.uk\)](#)

Be prepared for the unexpected

Communities in Devon are being invited to apply for funding to help them be better prepared for emergencies or unexpected events.

Independent charity Devon Communities Together is working with DCC and the Environment Agency to provide the funding opportunities.

This latest programme is financed by DCC and the South West Regional Flood & Coastal Committee local levy funding, and is administered by Devon Communities Together as part of its role in the Devon Community Resilience Forum (DCRF), whose core mission is to help communities prepare for, and respond to, emergencies.

Scheme 1 – up to £250 for communities that wish to develop their own Community Emergency Plan

The Devon Community Resilience Board (DCRB) wants to encourage more communities to produce a Community Emergency Plan (CEP).

A CEP is a document which helps guide a community to organise a response to a local emergency, from flooding or snow to the completely unexpected. They ideally need to be updated every three years, however some communities in Devon either don't have a plan in place or are not sure how to put together a support document for their community. The aim is that by providing this funding, many more communities across the county will be able to put plans in place to ensure their resilience in case anything happens within their community.

Once approved and completed, the DCRB will upload a completed CEP to a secure government gateway. This enables emergency responders to combine local knowledge with their expertise, allowing an effective place-based, joined-up response.

Devon's communities can bid for this fund to help form their own Community Emergency Planning group.

Further guidance and support on creating the group can also be provided from the DCRF with in-person attendance from a Devon Communities Together Resilience Project Officer. <https://www.devoncommunities.org.uk/grant-funding-emergency-flood-resilience>

Scheme 2 – up to £1,500 for small scale works and resilience equipment (once a CEP is in place)

Experience has shown that a wide range of small resilience measures can make a real difference to communities. This funding is available to communities to improve their own resilience with equipment and small scale works, and may range from the provision of sandbag stores and other flood protection equipment, road signs, tools and personal protective equipment, to one off small scale works to reduce risk.

DCRF recommends that a Community Emergency Response Team defines its own shopping list to meet local requirements. Examples of resilience measures can be provided by the DCRF, other communities, or Devon County Council to help a Community Emergency Planning Group consider what might be best for a particular area.

Fairtrade – directly supporting food producers.

Devon has successfully renewed its Fairtrade status for each of the last 14 years, by promoting and encouraging people to choose Fairtrade goods and support food producers across the world.

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working wages and conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers. More information can be found here: [Home - Fairtrade Foundation](#)

By requiring companies to pay sustainable prices to farmers and food producers, which must never fall lower than the market prices, Fairtrade enables the poorest and weakest producers to improve their position and have more control over their lives.

This year's Fairtrade Fortnight has begun and runs until Sunday 12 March. It is highlighting the urgent threat to the future of the foods we love and the livelihoods of the people who grow them, as they face the worst effects of the climate crisis.

According to the Fairtrade Foundation, food such as coffee, bananas and chocolate could become more difficult to buy due to climate change.

The current financial crisis is also taking a heavy toll on many people who are struggling to make ends meet, particularly so for smallholder farmers and workers, with the costs of fuel, fertiliser and food all increasing beyond what is affordable. See our DCC priorities here: [Did you know that Devon is a Fairtrade County?](#)

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