

## **2017/18 Budget Narrative**

The overarching aim of these budget proposals are to protect front-line services, while at the same time, transforming Pendle Council to meet the challenges of the coming years.

Local Government is changing! Wake up and smell the roses! How we are funded is changing. Ergo, councils need to change also. No longer can we rely on how things used to be. Harking back to the past is not the way ahead. No longer can we rely on central Government (of whatever hue) to be the main source of our funding. Councils and Councillors need to take much more responsibility for ensuring the council has funding to meet its needs.

Set against this background, I would like to lay out in front of you; proposals that aren't merely a one year, 'what we can cut budget' that are what we have become used to under the Labour-LibDem Coalition. These proposals are the start of much needed, radical reform of how Pendle Council delivers its services.

Work needs to begin immediately on drafting tender documents for services such as waste collection, grounds maintenance, pest control and leisure provision.

These are huge changes and will require months' of work, if any savings are to be secured in the financial year 2018/19. This is not reason to delay! We simply cannot wait until next year to start the work!

Pendle Council additionally needs to refocus its attention to improving economic growth in the Borough. We must ensure we have the right mix of homes being built, in areas we want to see them built. We need to ensure businesses are tempted to relocate here, whilst established businesses have the ability to expand and grow.

The creation of a new Brownfield Officer would complement such a focus. Their primary role would be progressing developments both residential and commercial, on Brownfield sites across the borough. While this post increases in costs in 17/18, it is envisaged that such a role could be funded out of an increase in planning fees, as identified in the recent Housing White Paper. A proactive Brownfield Officer will yield income for Pendle far in excess of his or her employment on-costs.

Pendle has excellent leisure facilities and our focus needs to be on securing their long-term future. We believe that by separating the leisure facilities (West Craven Sports Centre, Pendle Leisure Centre and Wavelengths) and marketing testing the viability of these sites, a solution can be found that can both produce savings and ensure the doors to these remain open. Access to local, high quality leisure facilities is important to our residents, so guaranteeing continuing access should be a high priority for this Council.

We need to be working with local sport groups, such as, Pendle Athletics Club and Trawden Athletics Club to see if there is any desire to take on a Community Asset Transfer of Seedhill Athletics track, providing these clubs with a home they can call their own. This will also allow them to access grants via their NGB's and Sport England.

By separating leisure and culture, we believe the Muni in Colne should be transferred to Colne Town Council to ensure the venue's long term future as a high-quality entertainment venue. Our emphasis should, first and foremost, be in building resilience of much loved cultural venues such as this.

The ACE Centre could receive interim management from Pendle Council until its future can be resolved following discussions with local councillors.

Our budget continues the contribution to PCSOs, as law and order is another key priority, but we would want to work closer with the staff we fund. We would seek to introduce the ability for PCSOs to issue Fixed Penalty Notices on behalf of Pendle Council for offences such as dog fouling and littering. We would introduce a new fine for dog walkers who fail to carry a dog bag. Other towns and boroughs have introduced similar schemes successfully and they have generated revenue for those Councils.

We have followed Officer advice and reduced the level of grant to CAB by £17,000. Senior Officers have reassured us that CAB can continue to operate as it does now with this reduction, which matches the contribution by Burnley Borough Council.

We believe we can continue to make better use of our staff and machinery to further drive down costs. For example, we believe basing a road sweeper permanently in the West Craven area will reduce the number of vehicles required through cutting travelling time. Time is lost every day. Vehicles have to get from and to the depot in Nelson, so basing a vehicle in Barnoldswick means West Craven and Eastern Colne will be better served at reduced cost.

We would work with Officers to develop the detailed proposal, but we have included an indicative saving in our proposals.

Last year, Council cut the funding to provide the late-night bus service through Nelson, Colne and ending in Barnoldswick. West Craven Area Committee subsequently provided the funding. However, it's not only West Craven that benefits from this service, so it's only right the cost comes from Pendle as a whole. We have proposed reintroducing the £7,700 grant to support this important service.

Our Budget proposals have been based on figures provided by Senior Council Officers, following extensive discussions. We believe they are achievable. More importantly, they are necessary to ensure we can continue to provide the best possible service for the residents of Pendle.