

## **Amendment received in accordance with Standing Order No 8**

Moved by Councillor Kitching

Seconded by Councillor Hunt

The Liberal Democrat group acknowledges, with thanks, the hard work of the finance team in once again bringing forward a balanced budget, despite the deepening challenges to funding imposed on local authorities by the government. This is a particularly commendable situation this year given the increasing number of councils issuing section 114 notices.

As in previous years we recognise that this is a financially well managed council and that prudent decisions made by the finance team continue to allow the Council to remain in good financial health.

Our amendments therefore do not seek to undermine the budget as a whole, but to identify some key areas of investment and support that reflect the concerns and priorities raised by our residents.

We seek to improve the safety of walking routes, particularly into and around the town centre; to expand the offering of active travel hubs; and to offer increased support to the lowest income households in our borough during the ongoing cost of living crisis.

### **1. Safer Walking Routes**

We note:

- i. The significant upcoming investment into Active Travel, supported by funding from the South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority (SYMCA).
- ii. That Active Travel encompasses walking or wheeling to another form of transport – for example to a bus stop or train station - as well as for the entirety of a work or leisure journey.
- iii. With the ongoing cost of living crisis, many residents might wish to choose walking some of these journeys as a free option.
- iv. Feeling unsafe on our streets can be a huge barrier to undertaking journeys on foot.
- v. Concerns about crime, including burglaries, muggings and antisocial behaviour are raised frequently by residents, leading to them not feeling safe.
- vi. Other factors, such as poor lighting, low footfall, lack of pedestrian signage, lack of CCTV monitoring and lack of street cleanliness can further contribute to people feeling unsafe to walk certain routes.
- vii. That we wish to respond to residents' concerns and remove barriers to this type of Active Travel by identifying, investing in and improving safe walking routes.
- viii. That such a project should be community led, with involvement of ward members, area councils, South Yorkshire Police and the voices of residents,

because as Liberal Democrats, we believe in taking decision making closer to the communities we serve.

- ix. That robust community consultation exercises, such as a Citizens' Assembly, are an excellent way of putting the voices of communities at the heart of decision making, and would have value in engaging residents with active travel and community safety projects.

We therefore propose:

- a. Allocating "in principle" some of the yet to be formally allocated resources from p168 of the budget pack to a Safer Walking Routes project.
- b. For a robust community consultation exercise, such as a Citizens' Assembly, to be set up to identify potential walking routes into and out of Barnsley Interchange and Glassworks Square from communities within 1.5-2 miles of that location, and the interventions needed to make them feel safer.
- c. That a project team is set up to integrate, subject to due diligence and process, the learnings from the community consultation with input from elected members representing wards adjacent to the town centre, local policing teams, safer neighbourhoods and Area Council officers.
- d. That the relevant officer teams utilise this information, subject to SYMCA, CRSTS & DfT eligibility criteria, to develop an appropriate scheme and business case.
- e. That the budget document be amended as necessary to formalise these plans.

## **2. Expanding active travel hubs**

We note:

- i. With thanks, the £6m investment in accessibility to the proposed Park & Ride at Penistone train station.
- ii. That this project does not appear to involve an Active Travel hub, like those proposed at Barnsley Interchange and at Elsecar Heritage Centre.
- iii. That this is a missed opportunity in a community that is keen to embrace Active Travel in all forms.
- iv. That robust community consultation exercises, such as a Citizens' Assembly, are an excellent way of putting the voices of communities at the heart of decision making, and would have value in engaging residents with active travel and infrastructure projects such as this.

We therefore propose:

- a. Allocating "in principle" some of the yet to be formally allocated resources from p168 of the budget pack to a Penistone Active Travel Hub.
- b. That a robust community consultation exercise, such as a Citizens' Assembly, be set up to identify what this Active Travel Hub should look like in Penistone.

- c. That the relevant officer teams utilise this information, subject to SYMCA, CRSTS & DfT eligibility criteria, to develop an appropriate scheme and business case.
- d. That the budget document be amended as necessary to formalise these plans

### **3. Council Tax Support Scheme**

We note:

- i. The Council's efforts, via the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTS), to offer financial support to the lowest income households in the borough.
- ii. The additional discounts approved in the 23/24 budget offered significant and much appreciated increased support to those households during the cost of living crisis.
- iii. That for those in LCTS band 1, a 100% discount on their council tax in 23/24 saved them approx. £2 per week which they will now have to find for 24/25.
- iv. That the cost of living crisis is ongoing, with too many households still struggling to choose between heating and eating.
- v. That current budgetary constraints have made it impossible to extend the 23/24 LCTS discounts for another year.

We therefore propose:

- a. Amending budget recommendation 2.1 g (p129) to add words below in italics: "that a full review of the current scheme be undertaken during 24/25 including the necessary consultations for any proposed changes with an update being provided to Members later in 2024. *This review should seek to offer the maximum possible discounts to the lowest income households in the borough.*"