

## Report to Saltash Town Council March 2026

Cllr. Hilary Frank



### CORNWALL COUNCIL BUDGET 2026/27

At our February Full Council meeting, Cornwall Council approved its budget for 2026/27.

As I've said in earlier reports to Town Council, the draft budget we published in December had to be substantially reworked after the government published its final Local Government Finance Settlement just before Christmas.

In the summer, government had indicated they would apply a 'remoteness' factor across services in rural and coastal authorities like Cornwall to recognise the higher costs of delivering services in areas like ours, but in the final settlement this factor was applied to Adult Social Care only, with no recognition of remoteness in key areas such as children's services or transport. This change left Cornwall Council approximately £13 million worse off than originally expected and required immediate reworking of the budget proposals.

In addition, in-year budget monitoring identified further pressures within Adult Social Care, with around £10.7 million of additional costs in the current year. This is driven by over 250 more people than anticipated requiring support, and by the average cost of care rising by around £35 per person per week above budgeted levels. With around 7,000 residents supported through Adult Social Care, even relatively small shifts in demand or unit cost translate into very substantial financial pressure.

So January and February involved intensive Cabinet, officer and scrutiny meetings to re-balance the budget in light of that reduced settlement and worsening in-year pressures.

Cornwall Council is legally required to set a balanced budget each year. The draft budget proposals were examined in detail by the Budget Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee in monthly meetings since September, where members had the opportunity to question assumptions and suggest changes.

Members may differ on aspects of the final decision, but the financial pressures remain and the Council must agree a balanced budget. The approved budget includes a 4.99% increase in overall Council Tax, comprising a 2% Adult Social Care precept and a 2.99% general increase.

Despite these pressures, we have been able to include:

- An additional £37 million investment in Children's Services, focused on strengthening early help, expanding family hubs and increasing local foster and residential provision.
- £43 million investment in Adult Social Care to address rising demand and reduce reliance on higher-cost crisis interventions.
- £3 million investment to improve the capability of the Fire Service

We will still need to deliver about £154 million further savings over the three-year period of the Medium Term Financial Plan. This is in addition to over half a billion pounds (£530 million) of savings delivered since becoming a unitary authority in 2009. This underlines the ongoing scale of the financial challenge facing the Council.

## PUBLIC REALM

In response to an increase in complaints about street weeds, general tidiness and grass cutting raised by residents in Saltash and across Cornwall, Cabinet has agreed a renewed focus on improving the public realm, and a coordinated, multi-service approach is about to be rolled out. We intend to deliver more consistent maintenance, improve overall cleanliness and raise grounds maintenance standards, with particular focus on the quality and timing of grass cutting.

## COMMUNITY CHEST 2025/26

Here is a report on the funding allocated from my Community Chest in the current financial year:

APPLICANT	AMOUNT
<b>Oak Folk Gardening Group</b> To support transport to gardening sessions for elderly residents.	£200
<b>The Core</b> To support a weekly cooking club for young people who are home-educated.	£200
<b>Tamar Trotters Running Club</b> To cover the purchase of biodegradable cups at the Saltash Half Marathon.	£160
<b>Cornwall International Male Choral Festival</b> To support the biennial Festival that brings more than 1000 singers from over 50 Cornish, British and international choirs and delivers around 20 events across Cornwall, including Saltash. <a href="#">cimcf</a>	£250
<b>Tamar Protection Society (Mary Newmans Cottage)</b> To support 'From Garden to Hearth: Bringing the Elizabethan Cottage Garden Indoors', a new permanent and immersive experience that will show how cottage garden herbs and plants were used for cooking, healing and daily life. <a href="#">Tamar Protection Society</a>	£390
<b>Quiet Connections CIC</b> To support the delivery of community sessions in Saltash for quiet voices and creativity. <a href="#">Welcome to Quiet Connections • Quiet Connections</a>	£200
<b>TOTAL ALLOCATED</b>	£1400
Total of remaining funds	£0

## **SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER AND SEND CONSULTATION**

The government published their Schools White Paper and SEND reforms on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. The main aims are to:

1. Build a genuinely inclusive education system
2. Redesign SEND pathways around early intervention and outcomes
3. Rebalance investment towards prevention and family support

Full implementation will be from 2028 onwards, and will include a new national curriculum.

Encouragingly, Cornwall Council already has strong foundations in early intervention, including a strong track record Family Hubs, early years support and partnership working, but there is important and detailed work ahead. There is a 12-week consultation period in place, and in the short term I'm focused on getting an understanding of what the proposals could mean for families and schools in Cornwall.

## **FREE COURSES: UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD**

Cornwall Council is launching new Understanding Your Child groups this Spring.

These programmes offer 2-hour sessions each week for 10 weeks, and will be delivered in a hybrid format, hosted from Family Hubs across Cornwall, with the option to join virtually via Microsoft Teams.

The course themes are:

- Understanding Your Child 0-11 years
- Understanding Your Child 0-5 years
- Understanding Your Child 4-11 years
- Understanding Your Child 4-11 with ADHD
- Understanding Your Child 4-11 with Autism
- Understanding Your Child 4-11 with Disabilities (including learning)

For more details, visit: [Understanding Your Child 0-11 » Cornwall Council](#)