

**Wiltshire Council**

**Full Council**

**23 February 2021**

---

**Item 8 – Wiltshire Council Financial Plan**

**From Ian James**

**To Councillor Pauline Church, Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Commercial Investment and Councillor Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council**

**Question 1 (P21-12)**

On 17th February the Prime Minister stated that "Protecting vulnerable children has to be a Conservative Government's priority during COVID."

In the Gazette & Herald it was stated that £5.9m had been withdrawn from the Social Care fund for vulnerable children, will the Cabinet member return that £5.9m to that budget head to allow vulnerable children to be cared for?

**Response:**

We do not recognise the £5.9m reduction in Social Care for vulnerable children, in fact the budget proposals for 2021/22 will see Children's Services receiving an increase in funding of £8.3m on the previous financial year; an uplift of 11%.

**Question 2 (P21-13)**

As I am sure you know that the City of Bristol sank £60m of Council funds into Bristol Energy, and Croydon Council purchased a property portfolio which has cost the Council in excess of £ Both these Councils are near to bankruptcy.

Future Chippenham has stated that costs for the road infrastructure for the distributor road around Chippenham have risen to £106m a rise in estimated costs of 25% in 12 months since the HIF bid was announced to the public. Failure to complete the road by 2026 will mean the Government will claw back money from the grant of £75m. As with any large infrastructure project these sums will keep rising. As the cabinet knows full well this is a high risk project, at what stage does the Council walk away. Is it when costs reach £150 or £175m?

**Response**

The road infrastructure will be a significant capital investment by the Council and, subject to consultation and the local plan, should work progress the timing and agreement with the Government will see the Council utilise the £75m in the early stages of the proposed works to part fund the cost of the road, with additional costs recovered from development as it proceeds.

Whilst the Council are cognisant of the risks involved with any large scale investment, the grant determination agreement that was agreed between

Government and the Council was constructed to mitigate the financial risks to the Council around various elements including the overall cost, the timing and factors that are outside of the Councils control in relation to the management of the project.