

Braintree and Witham Times

23rd November 2015

Braintree District Council must make millions of pounds worth of savings

Braintree District Council will have to make savings of up to £3.34million by 2020.

The Council's plans to balance the budget, which follows a reduction of government funding, will be discussed by councillors at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on Monday, November 30.

The amount of Government Grant funding the Council gets for its day to day spending has reduced by £2million over the past four years.

With a further 40% reduction predicted following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on the 25th November, its financial gap could be as much as £3.34million by 2020.

Council Leader Cllr Graham Butland said: "We have some tough decisions to make, but we are focused on maintaining our key frontline services.

"We're in a better position than most thanks to our good financial planning over a number of years but we still have a significant challenge ahead.

"There will be difficult decisions to make but I'm confident we can meet those challenges head on. We remain an ambitious Council for the district and will continue to invest in projects to help the district grow and prosper with economic growth and new homes."

A number of ways to make these savings are now under consideration.

Council tax could be increased by 1.97% which works out as 6p per week for a band D property.

The Local Council Tax Support Scheme could be changed so that claimants of working age will have to pay a minimum of 24% of the council tax liability, which is currently set at 20%.

A 50% council tax premium would be placed on empty homes, affecting 271 properties across the district which have been unoccupied for 2 years or more.

The garden waste collection service may also be suspended between December and February.

Braintree Council could reduce its contribution to the Citizens Advice Bureau, Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency, Braintree District Museum and the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Stour Valley Project.

Payments made to Parish and Town Councils will be phased out over the next three years saving; this reflects the fact that by 2020 Braintree Council will no longer receive a revenue grant from the Government.