Leader of the Council’s Budget Statement
Protecting Services and Investing in the Future

Through this budget we have sought a balance between protecting essential frontline services and investing so that our towns and villages will continue to grow and thrive. We must acknowledge though that the amount of funding that Calderdale receives from Central Government continues to reduce, which means that even after taking account of the increase in Council Tax, we have less to spend on all services other than adult social care. So we continue to have to make some very difficult choices.

However, I still believe that this budget will allow us to continue to deliver those universal Council services which are so important to local people. It will allow us to support those who need our help most by providing a significant increase in investment in social care, to help meet rising demand, provide the right support for looked after children and ensure that care workers are paid the National Living Wage. It will also help to stimulate the growth needed to build a prosperous future for everyone with the creation of a £10 million investment fund for regeneration schemes in the Borough’s smaller towns and local communities.

To help the Council maintain its essential local services, Council Tax rates will rise by 2.99% in 2018-19. The Council will also use the Social Care Precept to raise Council Tax bills by a further 3% in 2018-19 so it can continue to provide high quality care for frail and vulnerable people, and meet increasing demand as the population ages.

The budget includes additional money for some Council services which require extra support. A funding boost of £150,000 in 2018/19 was agreed for the Safer, Cleaner, Greener service which manages and maintains Calderdale’s many parks, open spaces, children’s play areas, woodlands and nature reserves. The service is also responsible for sweeping roads and footpaths, emptying litter bins and removing graffiti and fly-tipping from Council land. The Youth Offending Team and Young People’s Services will receive an extra £50,000 each year to help tackle youth offending and support victims of crime.

The budget also identified:

- additional funding for winter maintenance and gritting;
- targeted funding to help tackle poverty and homelessness;
- continued funding for the emergency living scheme to support those affected most by the changes to benefit schemes; and
- an additional fire safety building control officer which was a recommendation within the fire safety review following the tragedy at Grenfell Tower.

To save money there will be some changes to Council services, which include:

- reducing the number of managers and other staff by merging teams and moving more services on-line;
- working more effectively with our partners in the health sector to maximise the resources we use jointly;
- funding different priorities from the public health budget;
- increasing the charges for some services that the Council provides, such as bereavement services;
- reducing some of the money paid to West Yorkshire Combined Authority and
- spending less on IT, staff training and other internal support services.

Although the budget was agreed at Annual Budget Council on the 26th February 2018, the hard work starts now to deliver on these plans so that the Council can continue to deliver vital services whilst at the same time managing its finances well to balance its books.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity again to thank everyone who contributed to this budget. All of your help was greatly appreciated.