



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bexley's Conservatives accept Government financial bailout

Bexley's Labour councillors have responded to news that the Conservative-controlled Council has agreed the terms of a Government bail out which will allow it to borrow almost £9 million to stabilise its financial position.

Bexley is one of just four local authorities who have been forced to borrow money for day-to-day expenditure.

Speaking after the announcement Cllr Daniel Francis, Leader of Bexley Labour Group said:

“After 11 years of supporting its own Government's policy of substantial cuts to local government, Bexley's Conservatives have led us to a position where the only way to stabilise the council's budget is to borrow money for day-to-day expenditure.

“Bexley's hard-pressed council taxpayers face a position where council tax will rise, services will fall, and taxpayers will be paying back this borrowing for the next twenty years.”

Cllr Joe Ferreira, Shadow Cabinet Member for Resources and Growth said:

“While the pandemic has clearly placed financial strain on the council, the council would have faced significant pressure and difficulty in balancing its budget and would have had to take the majority of its current decisions regardless.

“After 15 years of managing the council's finances, the Conservatives in Bexley have led the council to a position where in order to balance the budget it proposes to close children centres, reduce library opening hours and make staff cuts across the council including in the social care, road safety, and education teams – all while raising council tax, selling off assets and borrowing to pay for day-to-day spending.”

-ENDS-

Notes to editors

The council's earmarked and general fund reserves were reduced from £61.3 million in March 2016 to £35.2 million in March 2020 prior to the start of the pandemic. The vast majority of this reduction occurred in order to support the budget in the 2018/19 financial year.