

REPORT TO: Town Council – 18th December 2017

REPORT ON: Budget and Precept – 2018-19

REPORT BY: Administrator

REPORT DATE: 15th December 2017

BACKGROUND

From July 2017, each committee has been reviewing their services, ambitions, operational needs and duties to support the community for 2018/19 and beyond.

A realistic budget was set for 2017/18, as the predicted carry forward is just £20k, which can be attributed to work to create a youth council, which is still ongoing, and the use of CIL income for planning advice rather than using the budget set for planning consultation.

Over the past 5 years, Daventry Town Council has changed to meet the needs of the Town and its community and now, due to cuts to services within the County, District and the Police, it faces new challenges. These new challenges, bring with them a positive, as any new service the Council adopts has the positive effect of the Council being given the responsibility and power to ensure that Town matters are managed at a local level, enabling improved response to residents' concerns.

The Finance and Policy Committee has reviewed each budget line and the following analysis identifies the major increases and reductions that influence the final precept proposal.

Budget Analysis

Income

Allotment rent has been increased by £450 for 2018/19 but, due to a drop in the number of retailers joining the retail radio scheme the predicted income is an increase of £170 on 2017/18. Allotments and retail radios are the only services that generate income for the Council, this is an area to be considered in any future planning.

Expenditure

Finance & Policy – No major changes in operational costs. Wages and salaries have been increased by £5k (4%) to enable the appointment of temporary staff and meet anticipated increases in the Council's annual and National Joint Council pay review.

Further to a report from a working group, appointed by the Community Services Committee to research options to introduce a service that improved the quality of life for residents, the Community services committee recommended that F&P include an amount of £38k as a new budget line to promote community safety and reduce the fear of crime.

Recommendation:

New Cost Centre: Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - £38,000

To appoint a Community Ranger (in accordance to the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme) to provide an on-street presence for the Town Council and work in partnership with the Police, through a sponsored PSCO, to jointly promote community safety and reduce the fear of crime (Appendix 1).

Community Services – Community Services committee are proposing the reduction of the newsletter budget by £2k, as it was agreed this medium was an expensive and ineffective

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way of communicating with the Town's residents and an annual newsletter, circulated in conjunction with the Annual Town Assembly was more effective.

The Committee further agreed to delete the budget line, of £5k for children and young people, as the project was ongoing, and any funding could be approved, as and when required, from the general fund. This reduction was negated by an increase in the general events budget by £4680k and £2425 to improve promotion of events.

The Community Services Committee also propose the inclusion of a new budget line to provide social capital for services that care for the community. As austerity continues to affect the budgets of principle authorities many services are being reduced or withdrawn and one such service is Citizen's Advice Daventry District. In 2017/18 the Town Council granted monies to maintain their financial advice service up to and including December 2017. The Finance and Policy Committee are now recommending that this funding continues but is included in the 2018/19 budget, to ensure reserves are not depleted and funding for this service is sustainable.

Recommendation:

New cost centre: Social Capital, £13,099

To award funding to Daventry Citizens Advice Daventry District, for the amount of £13,099, for the period 1st April 2018 to 31 March 2019, payable 1st April 2018.

Museum Committee – The museum committee reviewed their budget and are proposing an increase of £300, which has minimal effect on the budget and precept for 2018/19.

Planning & Development – The Committee considered their budget of £10k for planning consultation and recognised the benefits this budget gave to obtain professional advice in relation to planning matters and with the recent receipt of CIL monies, it was agreed that income from CIL could be used for planning advice.

Recommendation:

Removal of budget line for planning consultation.

Earmarked Reserves

Members of the Finance and Policy committee agreed that short-term expenditure could be earmarked and if necessary reimbursed via precept monies in the following financial year. This thought process can be effectively demonstrated in relation to monies for the 2018 election, the Council is unable to predict the total cost to the public and has therefore earmarked £6k and, if necessary will precept to replace these funds over the next 4 years.

Other earmarked funding is for Children and Young People, these monies were precepted for in 2017/8 but were unspent, so monies have been retained in earmarked to enable the project to move forward in 2018/19.

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The highest figure earmarked is £38k for a PCSO, which fulfils the Council's ambition to consider and carry out its duty to consider Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006¹ by creating a team of professional and accredited personnel with the powers to deal with crime and disorder and work together to resolve issues within the community and build a safer and healthier place to live.

The reason for earmarking this funding is that a PSCO is contracted to the Council, for one year, via the Police Commissioners Office, who has given his assurance that a sponsored PCSO will be dedicated to the sponsor and their duties will be in agreement with the sponsor and they will only be posted outside the parish under exceptional policing circumstances. By using earmarked funding, it enables the Council to trial the scheme and if successful precept for this service in future years.

CONCLUSION

On reviewing the budget proposals submitted by each Committee, and having due regard to the Council's duties and the needs of the community the Finance and Policy Committee recommends the Council budget and a precept of £409,095 be approved, which is an increase of £2.37 on a band D property (5.04%).

¹ Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006 (This requires responsible authorities to consider crime and disorder (including antisocial behaviour and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the exercise of all their duties, activities and decision-making. This means that in all policies, strategies and service delivery there is a need to consider the likely impact on crime and disorder.