

REPORT TO: Town Council – 27th January 2020
REPORT ON: Council Budget and Precept – 2020-21
REPORT BY: Finance Officer
REPORT DATE: 24th January 2020

BACKGROUND

Daventry Town Council has agreed to the transfer of assets and services from Daventry District Council, which includes Daventry Market, Street Furniture, The Holy Cross and Welton Road Cemetery and the Open Spaces that fall within the Parish.

The transfer of the Market from Daventry District Council (DDC) to Daventry Town Council (DTC) was completed in November 2019, with the transfer of Welton Road Cemetery completed in January 2020. Negotiations are currently taking place between DDC and DTC in relation to the transfer of the street furniture and the Holy Cross Churchyard, which is expected to be complete early 2020. Expenditure for Daventry Market, Welton Road Cemetery the Holy Cross Churchyard are included within the proposed budget and precept for 2020/21.

The transfer of the open spaces from DDC to DTC will proceed when parliamentary approval is given for local government reorganisation, therefore the District Council have confirmed that due to the uncertainty of when this approval will be given, that they will be including the expenditure for the open spaces within the Daventry Town Special expenses as part of the DDC budget consideration for the council year 2020/21.

Each Committee has reviewed their services, ambitions, operational needs and duties to support the community for 2020/21 and beyond, with the Finance and Policy Committee having reviewed and considered each of the budgets put forward by the relevant committee alongside the anticipated expenditure for the services that have been transferred from DDC to DTC.

The Finance and Policy Committee makes the following recommendations based on a review of each budget line, identifying the major increases and reductions that influence the final precept proposal:

Budget Analysis

Income

Historically the allotments and the retail radio scheme have been the only income generating services provided by the Council, the transfer of Welton Road Cemetery will see an additional service that will also generate income.

The budget for CCTV Contribution has increased by £2k, due to the increase in retailers subscribed to the business together retail scheme, launched June 2018.

The price per pole for allotments has increased for 2020/21, but the overall impact will be minimal so there is no change proposed.

With the transfer of Welton Road Cemetery from DDC to DTC, the income of £56,815 (as per DDC's budget 2019/2020) for burial fees has been included in DTC budget for 2020/21.

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Expenditure

Finance & Policy

The Finance and Policy Committee are proposing:

- an overall increase in wages and salaries by £106k (40%), this is to enable an increase in staff hours, the appointment of two additional staff members and to meet anticipated increases in the Council's annual and National Joint Council pay review. This increase also includes the Town Ranger which the Committee proposes to remove from the Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and include within the wage and salaries budget.
- the reduction by £30K to £10k of the Local Government Reorganisation budget. Further to the completion of a number of assets and services from DDC to DTC, the council will need to continue to seek professional advice and or services in relation to the Local Government Reorganisation and the transfer and devolution of the open spaces from Daventry District Council to Daventry Town Council.
- an increase of £1K for subscriptions due to the need to subscribe to advisory services for the Market and Cemetery.
- an increase of £1K for external audit fees for 2020/21.
- an increase of £2K for additional software requirements, additional Microsoft licences for additional staff, installation of software for the administration of the Cemetery and an increase of users licensed to access the Finance and Allotment software.
- an increase of £2k for Town Council Elections scheduled to take place in May 2020.
- an increase of £13.7K for the CCTV Provision, £0.5K for increase in electricity costs, £1.4K being for additional retails radios for the increase in subscribers, and £12K increase for the monitoring of the CCTV service.
- a decrease within the Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 budget of £32K, as the Town Ranger will be directly employed by Daventry Town Council.
- the inclusion of a new budget for the sum of £53.7K for the provision of services at Welton Road Cemetery.
- the inclusion of a new budget for the sum of £7.4K for grounds maintenance of the Holy Cross Churchyard.
- the inclusion of a new budget for the sum of £1.6K for the management of Daventry Market.

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Community Services

Finance and Policy Committee have reviewed and recommend the following proposals from the Community Services Committee:

- an increase of £4K to the events budget, the Committee propose the removal of the Arts Festival budget of £2K, with the focus for the event being to encourage and facilitate local groups in the promotion of arts within and by the community. The Committee also propose the inclusion of £6K for the return of the Classic Car Show to the schedule of the Town Council events for 2020/21.
- a decrease of £25.5K to the Town Enhancements budget, as the expenditure for 2020/21 only relates to £11.5K for the installation and removal of the Christmas Lights and £10K to be earmarked for future replacement. The Committee also propose an increase of £0.5K for the Town Centre's floral displays
- an increase of £1K to Allotment Maintenance for the continuation of pest control management on all allotment sites.

Museum Committee

Finance and Policy Committee have reviewed and recommend the following proposals from the Museum Committee:

- an increase of £340, which has minimal effect on the budget and precept for 2020/21.

Planning & Development

Finance and Policy Committee have reviewed and recommend the following proposals from the Planning & Development Committee:

- that a £0 budget should be maintained for 2020/21.

Earmarked Reserves

Finance and Policy Committee have reviewed the proposals from all committees in relation to earmarking funds for future projects. Please refer to appendix A for a full report.

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 of £690,197 and a precept of £598,823 be approved, which is, based on base line figures for 2019/20 an increase of £3.67 on a band D property (7.44%).