

REPORT TO: Town Council – 25th January 2021
REPORT ON: Council Budget and Precept – 2021-22
REPORT BY: Responsible Finance Officer
REPORT DATE: 22nd January 2021

BACKGROUND

The transfer of the Holy Cross Churchyard, Street Furniture, Street Lighting and Open Spaces from Daventry District Council (DDC) to Daventry Town Council (DTC) was completed in June 2020. The expenditure for these services was precepted for by Daventry District Council for the tax year 20/21 under Daventry Town Special Expenses. For the financial year 21/22 Daventry Town Council has included these costs within its proposed budget, thus explaining why there is an anticipated 117% increase in the precept.

Each Committee has reviewed their services, ambitions, operational needs and duties to support the community for 2021/22 and beyond, with the Finance and Policy Committee having reviewed and considered each of the budgets put forward by each committee.

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

The allotments, retail radio scheme and Welton Road Cemetery are the only income generating services provided by the Council.

The budget for the CCTV contribution has decreased by £1k as the challenges faced by retailers due to the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a decrease of the number of retailers subscribed to the business together retail scheme.

The price per pole for allotments has increased for 2021/22, but the overall impact will be minimal so there is no change proposed in the income for this facility.

Due to there being no increases to the burial fees for Welton Road Cemetery the budgeted income remains the same.

A contribution of £30K from Northampton County Council provides for the cyclic highway maintenance, which forms part of the responsibilities within the transfer of the Open Spaces from DDC to DTC.

Expenditure

Finance & Policy

The Finance and Policy Committee are proposing:

- the additional budget line of £678K for the management and maintenance of the recently transferred open spaces.
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- the additional budget line of £3K for the management and maintenance of public realm/street furniture
- the additional budget line of £5.5K for the management and maintenance of street lighting.

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- a decrease of £4K for Welton Road Cemetery, due to reduction in anticipated costs for repairs and maintenance.
- an increase of £4K for the Holy Cross Churchyard, to provide funding for repairs and maintenance.
- an overall increase in wages and salaries by £62k (19%), as approved by Council on 30th November 2020, to enable the implementation of a new office structure, the appointment of an additional staff member and contingency to meet the anticipated increases in the council's annual and National Joint Council pay review.
- the inclusion of a new budget for the sum of £2K for the provision of protective clothing and equipment for staff members.
- an increase of £1.5K for additional software licence requirements.
- the inclusion of £1K for Office and IT infrastructure to accommodate additional needs as the staffing team grows.
- a decrease of £6k for Town Council Elections, elections were scheduled to take place in May 2020, however these were postponed to May 2021, the monies precepted in 2020/21 are to be earmarked and utilised for the anticipated expenditure for 2021/22.
- an increase of £1.5K for the Remembrance Service for the provision of additional stewards to assist in traffic management.
- a decrease within the premises budget of £2.7K as the loan repayment for the purchase of 3 New Street is less than the previous lease charge.

Community Services

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

- a decrease of £10.5K to the Community Transport Budget, the service was suspended due to government guidelines relating to Covid-19, the underspend from 2020/21 is to be earmarked for use towards the anticipated expenditure for 2021/22.
- a decrease of £21K to the events budget. The Committee proposed earmarking £25K of unspent monies for events (i.e. fireworks and the motorcycle festival) that were cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions being earmarked in anticipation of these events being held in 2021. a £6K reduction. The Classic Car Show has not been included in the 21/22 schedule resulting in a decrease of £6k. The Committee propose the inclusion of £3K for the Town's Litter Campaign, which has proven successful since its launch in 2020. It is proposed that the Christmas event will be decreased by £4K and that the £3K allocated for the Food Festival will be removed to allow for the inclusion of £8K for the provision of four themed markets, including the Farmers Market and Christmas Market to take place in 2021.
- an increase of £3.5K to the Town Enhancements budget, which includes anticipated increase in the supply of the town flowers and annual provision of a Christmas tree.

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Museum Committee

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

- an increase of £1.1K for to account for increased costs to manage and maintain the new website and virtual element of engaging with the community.

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, as monies have been earmarked for to provide for the appointment of professional advice as required.

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 £1,472,437 and a precept of £1,291,879 be approved, based on the tax base* and precept for 2020/21 this will be an increase of £81.49 on a band D property (117.73%).

this is based on the estimated tax base for 2021/2022 which may be subject to change.*

***The council tax base figure reflects the actual amounts paid by residents and takes account of those who are eligible for discounts via local support schemes. The tax base figure is calculated by the principal authority (Daventry District Council) and approved by the soon to be West Northants Unitary authority and is expressed in terms of Band D properties. For the financial year 21/22 we are anticipating a decrease in the tax base as more people will be eligible for local support schemes.*