

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- 21/105

Committee:-	COUNCIL
Date:-	15 th December 2021
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Budget and Precept 2022-2023
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek Council's approval to a draft budget for consultation during December and January

2. Recommendations

Council is asked to approve a draft budget for the coming year.

3. Information

3.1. The Finance and Governance Committee considered the draft budget at its meeting on 26th November and asked for full Council to be provided with a draft budget which addressed the following criteria

- Sufficient funds to deliver key priorities for the coming year, most notably for new public toilets, a community grants scheme, a comprehensive events programme, sustainability interventions, and a revived general market. The budget also provides for - as yet unidentified – spending on community infrastructure, for example, litter bins. bus shelters, cycle parking, play equipment or road safety measures
- To build up an elections fund to pay for the 2025 elections without undue pressure on that year's budget
- To build up reserves over time so that they eventually represented 9 months of an annual budget

3.2. Members indicated that the budget should not exceed a sum equivalent to a £19.50 precept, assumed in the meeting to be £325,000. In fact, it is slightly different in both respects.

4. Out-turn for 21/22

4.1. The out-turn for 21/22 had been heavily impacted by the election costs for the May 2021 elections, which were 50% higher than estimated a year ago. This additional £17,000 cost will largely deplete the Council's existing reserves and contingency in 2021/22. A facility has been agreed in principle with NNC to spread the cost of the elections over more than one year if necessary.

4.2. In most other respects, the out-turn has been broadly even, with small overspends on ITC, training and events balanced by underspending on salaries, allotments and the neighbourhood plan communications (which will slip into 22/23).

4.3. The budget provides for a new part time post which will help deliver the events programme, but also take the lead on communications, website and social media improvements, support for the Mayor and Town Meetings and engagement generally.

4.4. The budget currently provides for no expenditure on a community lottery, which is the subject of a separate item on this agenda.

5. Precept setting

5.1. The Council's precept is fixed by dividing its budget requirement by the tax base supplied by NNC. The tax base is the "Band D equivalent" number of properties in the Council's area. This has increased from 16327 to 16636 over the last year.

5.2. The Council's current precept is £8.21, which is the lowest parish precept in North Northamptonshire and amongst the 5% lowest in England. Each additional £1000 of expenditure by the Council increases the precept by about 6p a year for each household. It is likely that a £19.50 precept will still be amongst the lowest in North Northamptonshire next year.

5.3. Council tax precept increases for parish councils are not capped.

6. Consultation and Engagement

6.1. The following consultation process was considered and agreed by the Finance and Governance committee.

- Consultation period 16th December – 16th January
- Press release on budget and plan 16th December and reminder on 5th January
- Website consultation page live from 16th December until 16th January

- Email to all organisations which have participated in town meetings during 2021-16th December

Background Papers

Reports to Finance and Governance Ctte

6/12/21