

# KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

## REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC22/029

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Timetable and Consultation Process, 2023-24 Budget
Wards Affected:-	All

### 1. Purpose of Report

To seek agreement to the process for making and consulting on the 2023-24 budget

### 2. Recommendations

That the timetable set out below be approved and that consultation be conducted on the lines set out in the report.

### 3. Process, consultation and engagement

- 3.1. Last year, the budget making process was started in October and ran until the end of January, but this was later than desirable, and this report therefore proposes a process and timetable, substantially based on last year's but with earlier dates within it.
- 3.2. The Council has a duty to provide local taxpayers with details of how money will be spent if the budget exceeds £140,000. Members will need to agree the optimum way to achieve this as part of the process.
- 3.3. The following timetable, for making the budget and the consultation associated with it, is proposed:-

Event	Date	Purpose
Finance and Governance Committee	28 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	Agree principles to inform budget preparation Provisionally identify new or changed areas of expenditure.

Budget preparation period	1 <sup>st</sup> October to 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	Period for members to make proposals for items to be included within budget
Council	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	Council to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) consider likely 2022/23 budget out-turn</li> <li>b) consider a draft budget for 23/24 for consultation</li> <li>c) consider any changes to the corporate plan</li> <li>d) agree consultation process for both budget and corporate plan</li> </ul>
Finance and Governance Committee	26 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	Consider any recommendations from Council which have budgetary implications.
Consultation period	27 <sup>th</sup> October to 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	Consultation period over 6 weeks – nature to be agreed
Town Meeting	16 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	Consultation meeting to gather views from stakeholders as part of the consultation
Council	14 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	Consider consultation responses and agreed broad shape of budget; agree revisions to the corporate plan.
Council	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Agree final budget and precept
NNC deadline	20 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	Deadline for submitting precept request to NNC

3.4. Last year, the Council conducted its consultation partly through its website and by writing to some stakeholders, and NNC officers and members. 10 responses were received, which were detailed and considered answers to a consultation questionnaire. Other Councils conducted a more general consultation exercise from a market stall on market day and generated much larger numbers of replies, but ones which were less valuable in many senses as they addressed services or issues which were the responsibility of other agencies.

3.5. The timetable this year is earlier than in 2021, and includes the Town Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November. It should be possible to generate more engagement with more stakeholders than was possible last year, including using social media channels to highlight the consultation and to provide a less detailed questionnaire than was used in 2021 when the corporate plan was new and untested. Members may nevertheless wish to explore other ways of communicating the Council's financial and policy objectives with a wider audience.

#### **4. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications**

- 4.1. The Council's precept is currently £325,000 and the likely annual turnover is £360,000. The precept amount translates as band D average of £19.56 per household. This is significantly below the average for parish councils in North Northamptonshire but approximately the same as that levied by Corby and Wellingborough Town Councils, our most similar neighbours.
- 4.2. The budget may be heavily impacted by decision taken by NNC to devolve any services to parish councils during 2023-4, the financial implications of such devolution, and this Council's willingness to assume responsibility for any new services or facilities.

#### **5. Policy Implications**

The Corporate plan says that the Councils exists :-

- To understand what local people want and aspire to
- To provide services not already delivered by statutory bodies, where there is an unmet need
- To represent its area to other service providers
- To provide leadership to its community
- To provide civic pride and presence

Two of its policy objectives are

- the Council will function as efficiently and effectively as it can, as a steward of the public money with which it is entrusted.
- The Council will set out to explain what it is seeking to do, and why, and will listen to what local people have to say to it about their needs and aspirations.

#### Background Papers

Reports to Council and Finance and Governance Cttee – October 2021-January 2022

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