



Policy and Finance Committee

Date: 19 November 2018

Title: Budget Setting Process

Purpose of the Report: To help inform Members of the work to date in respects of the budget setting process

Contact Officers: Mark Saccoccio - Town Clerk
Clare Cummins – Finance Officer

Corporate Objective/s	Aim 1: To consolidate processes and procedures, ensuring operational efficiency and a structure which will underpin future service delivery by the Town Council.	
Implications:		
Financial	√	
Human Resources	√	The inclusion of a growth item within the Grounds and Environmental Service Area Team
Operational/Service delivery	√	
Procedural/Legal	√	
Risk/Health & Safety		

1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the Policy and Finance Committee be minded:-

1.1 To note the report

1.2 That each standing committee with budgetary responsibility be presented with its own draft budget for consideration and thereafter, for the draft budget to be returned to this committee on 21st January 2019 for its further consideration.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In accordance with established practice, the Town Council will be expected to have set a precept and notified the billing authority (Central Bedfordshire Council) of that amount by mid-January (albeit the principal authority will be made aware

that this information will not be forthcoming until 29th January 2019 at the very earliest).

2.2 The following provides a timeline for those committees with budgetary responsibility:-

- Grounds and Environmental Services Committee to be presented with its draft budget on Monday 3rd December 2018.
- Cultural and Economic Services Committee to be presented with its draft budget on Monday 10th December 2018.
- Planning and Transport Committee to be presented with its draft budget on Wednesday 12th December 2018.

2.3 Thereafter, the draft budget will be returned to this committee for its consideration (Monday 21st January 2019). Subject to committee approval, the budget will then be taken to Full Council for its ratification. Throughout this process, Members are actively encouraged to approach Officers should they seek clarification on any budgetary matters.

Precepting:-

2.4 On 23rd October 2018, the Town Council received details of the tax base for the forthcoming financial year. The tax base has increased by 1.29% from 14,270 dwellings to 14,456.

Year	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Tax Base	13,438	13,826	14,141	14,270	14,456
and year on year % increase		(+2.8% - 388 dwellings)	(+2.3% - 315 dwellings)	(+0.9% - 129 dwellings)	(+1.29% - 186 dwellings)

2.5 Assuming council tax remains unchanged at £149.58, the amount that the Town Council will be seeking the Principal Authority to precept on its behalf for the purposes of delivering its services will be the tax base (14,456) x council tax (£149.58) = £2,162,328.

0% Increase	Council Tax	Council Tax Base	Precepting Amount £	Net Expenditure	Impact on General Fund
			149.58 x 14,456	£2,498,828 - 336,50 (income)	
0	£149.58	14,456	2,162,328	2,162,328	0

2.6 Draft Budget Headlines

- £5,000 saving on photocopying, stationery and post as a result of Mod.gov, which has allowed for an increase in the IT Support budget as well as £1,500 additional investment in website improvements.

- The above cost savings alongside salary savings have also allowed for creation of a budget line of £5,000 for Mod Gov licensing.
- Additional £1,811 commitment to Grants and Donations (in line with RPI)
- Proposed that no budget be allocated to Parking (Highways Schemes) given that £65,000 is presently held in reserves for any future projects.
- Contribution to Capital Projects to remain at £200,000 per annum
- Astral Park gas usage reduced by £3,000
- Astral Park hall hire income to increase by £500 to £47,000
- Sports income to increase by £2,000
- Play Area investment to remain unchanged at £14,350
- One-off payment of £5,000 to be made to Leighton-Linslade In Bloom to support their work
- Grounds Salaries budget includes Growth Item which will be discussed at Agenda Item 15
- Grounds Maintenance budget to be reduced to £46,000
- Anticipated cemetery income to rise from £47,000 to £70,000
- Anticipated memorials income to rise from £12,000 to £18,000
- Bar and Catering incomes for Astral Park reprofiled to be more representative of actual income forecasts. Bar income reprofiled from £25,000 to £6,000 and catering income reprofiled from £25,000 to £16,000
- Anticipated canal festival income to increase by £400 from £9,600 to £10,000
- Market Income(s) for Tuesday and Saturday markets reprofiled to be more representative of actual income forecasts. Tuesday market income reduced from £40,000 to £35,000 and Saturday income reduced from £55,000 to £45,000

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 In accordance with Member expectation, a balanced budget can be achieved without the need to either draw down from reserves or indeed increase council tax. The freezing of council tax for the 7th consecutive year will not compromise the high-quality service that the Town Council offers its residents.

End.