

Full Council

Date:	21 January 2020
Title:	Budget and Precept 2020-2021
Contact Officer:	Jayne Cole, Town Clerk

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Council for the setting of the 2020-21 Precept thereby allowing for the submission of the Precept Request Form to South Oxfordshire District Council.

Background

2. The draft 2020-21 Revenue Budget has been prepared through an iterative process by the Budget Working Group, supported by the Town Clerk and the Management Team, with all Councillors being kept informed throughout.
3. A press release was published on 19 November 2019, summarising the main factors influencing the proposed budget for 2020-21. The detailed budget has not materially changed since then.
4. A detailed, line by line budget is attached as Appendix 8a and 8d. This is identical to the draft budget as previously circulated to all Councillors.
5. There were two Members of the Public who attended the widely publicised Budget drop-in session on 3 December 2019.
6. In line with previous years, one page detailed and summary budgets are attached as Appendices 9b and 9c.
7. The normal budget leaflet, to be made available to all residents, will be produced during February 2020 and will also include a simplified pie chart with explanatory notes.

Resource Appraisals

8. The funding last year of £5,000 to Thame Town Music Festival, £5,000 towards flood prevention measures for the Cuttle Brook, £10,000 for the Red Kite Family Centre, £10,000 for the Thame and District Day Centre and £15,000 towards funding a Youth Worker has been retained as has £4,000 contribution towards Citizens Advice Service.
9. The funding of £5,000 has been retained to enable the continued use of the screen at the Remembrance Day event.
10. Continued funding of £25,000 has been allocated towards the creation of a new Neighbourhood Plan and we are expected to appoint the consultants to undertake Thame NP2 very shortly.

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11. We are expecting other staffing cost impacts through the potential National Joint Council salary increase negotiations which the Town Council is legally obliged to abide by, along with some staff promotions cost.
12. The increase in tax base this year (effectively the number of houses in Thame) from 4691.6 to 4828.6 (an increase of 137) has provided an additional £21,637.78 of precept.
13. Numerous other adjustments, both up and down, have been made to reflect realistic cost / revenue expectations.
14. The budget presented shows a total net expenditure for 2020-21 estimated as £774,683, an increase from last year of £37,337. This is offset by a pull down from reserves of £12,030, giving a net precept required of £762,653.
15. The net effect of all the above change is that for the financial year 2020-21 the underlying precept increase for normally provided projects, functions and services is 1.94% (without the impact of the devolved services from Oxfordshire County Council / South Oxfordshire District Council).
16. However, when the additional net £16,576 of funding for services formerly funded by South Oxfordshire District Council is taken into account, the full precept increase is 3.76%, which equates to an extra £5.95 per annum (for the average Band D household).
17. The Town Council is committed to continuing to deliver the projects, functions and services that residents, workers, and visitors to the town expect. In 2020-21, the average whole household (i.e. Band D) will contribute a sum of £3.00 per week (through the precept portion of Council Tax) towards the required funding.

Action

The Council is asked:

- i) To consider and approve the budget for 2020-21.*
- ii) To agree that £762,653 be raised for the precept for 2020-21.*