# Budget 25/26 review

A working party from the finance committee has worked on the budget for 25/26 and have prepared a final version for council review and approval.

## Highlights

1. Precept request is for £47,320 – equivalent to £42.14 per Band D household
2. Budgeted operating costs (admin and open spaces) net of expected income is budgeted at £56,173 (24/25 forecast £55,534)
3. The forecast income included above is £6,000 comprising interest, cleansing grant and rental income from allotments / football club

The key points to note are as follows:

1. We have aimed to limit any increase in the precept to 5% - this has been achieved by adjusting our general reserves
2. We have taken a hard look at our costs and deliberately budgeted them to be “tight” to ensure that there remains a focus on cost control
3. We have reassigned reserves from specific to a more general to ensure a degree more flexibility for us to utilise the reserves

Specific points to note on costs are:

1. General assumption is a 3% increase on costs – this is obviously impacted by known increases out of our control (e.g. Employer NI costs) and those contracted costs
2. Where possible items have been removed from the budget where there has been no historic spend to ensure that there is no “padding” of costs .
3. There is a significant increase for tree works for the budget year as we need a full survey / action plan for this area

Specific points to note on reserves

1. Overall general reserves have reduced from £66k to £58k
2. We have reduced the categories of improvements to one general “improvement” category rather than specific allocations for MUGA / playground etc
3. We have eliminated reserves for Neighbourhood plan, highways etc as we see no likelihood of us incurring costs in these areas . The review of the Neighbourhood Plan is being funded from a grant received by the Lead Qualifying Body.
4. Our general reserves represent around 9 – 10 months of our anticipated expenditure budget. This represents a very healthy reserve position
5. In all areas, the impact of our CIL reserves has been ignored – we maintain a balance of some £47k of CIL monies not yet spent and this has remained constant. That does not mean we are not planning to utilise these funds – simply that it does not affect the precept calculation one way or the other!

Cllr Keech on behalf of the Finance Working Party

13th December 2024