

Urgent Matters

Summary – To note decisions taken during the pandemic under 3.2 of the Scheme of Delegation

1. Background

Under the Scheme of Delegation (para 3.2), the Town Clerk should consult the Town Mayor and relevant Chairs of Committees on urgent matters that cannot wait until a scheduled meeting. During the Coronavirus pandemic, a small number of decisions have been taken via this process and reported back to this committee. Since the last F&P meeting on 21 September, the following decisions have been made:

Urgent Matters Decisions. September – December 2020	
25 September 2020	Shop at 5 High St - Extension of lease on basis of a minimum 6 month term at the current rent subject to a 3 month minimum notice. This has been dealt with via a 'Tenancy at Will' letter to expire at 6 months or any time thereafter. Request that we start to advertise the property once the that 3 months' notice period has been given.
15 October 2020	Cancellation of Christmas Market
8 December 2020	Request from GreenSquare to retain, for a short period of time, part of the land being transferred over to the Town Council to use as a small car parking area for the Sales Office. This will be done under licence and should be built into the contract currently being drawn up by both sets of solicitors. It will be returned as open green space.

2. Points to Note

- Some of these decisions had financial income implications (shop rental and market cancellation) but not all
- The first 2 decisions are result of the pandemic

Town Clerk's Recommendation

The Town Clerk recommends that Members note this report.

Town Clerk

4 January 2021

Budgets/Precept 2021/22

Summary - In accordance with para. 3 of the Council's Financial Regulations, the Property, Planning and A&OS Committees have agreed draft expenditure budgets for 2021/22. Members of the F&P Committee are now asked to:

- i) Consider the draft expenditure budget for the Finance and Policy Committee including the recommendation from the Staffing Sub-Committee
- ii) Review proposed expenditure budgets for the Property, A&OS and Planning Committees
- iii) Agree a recommendation to Full Town Council for a final decision on budgets and a precept figure on 18 January 2021.

Members are reminded that these budgets are in draft format and are to be amended

1. Background

This year, the chairs of budget holding committees have met to review budgets and precept figures. First budget estimates equated to an increase of 11.62% and a Band D budget of £230.35. Subsequently, the Chair of the Finance Committee and the Town Clerk suggested savings which have been incorporated into each committee budget before submission to budget holding committees.

The A&OS, Property and Planning Committees have now all agreed budgets for 2021/22 for submission to the F&P Committee for review. These and the proposed F&P Committee budget are set out in this report. (The Staffing Sub-Committee has also made a recommendation to this committee). An agreed budget and precept figure should be submitted by F&P to FTC for final review and decision on 18 January 2020. The precept requirement must be returned to Wiltshire Council by 19 January 2021.

Other relevant background is set out at paras 6 -12 below.

2. Finance and Policy Committee - Proposed Budget 2021/22

The draft expenditure budget for the F&P Committee is attached at **Appendix 1**. Budget lines have been colour coded to help identify where there is an increase, decrease or an additional budget line.

The Staffing Sub- Committee met on 8 December and agreed that the following salary budgets be recommended to the F&P Committee. These figures have been incorporated into all committee budgets.

DEPARTMENT	BUDGET 20/21	BUDGET 21/22	DIFFERENCE
OFFICE (F&P)	221,157	216,896.14	-4,260.86
TOWN HALL (Property)	61,403	60,934.79	- 468.21
GROUND S (A&OS)	159,881	161,284.46	1,403.46
MC & YC (Property)	14,200	14,286.46	86.46

3. Review of Property, A&OS and Planning Committees Draft Budgets

The recommended Property, A&OS and Planning Committee budgets for 2021/22 are also at **Appendix 1**. Members of the F&P Committee now need to review these.

4. Budget Sheets for 2021/22

The budget sheets at **Appendix 1** gives us the following calculation:

EXPENDITURE

Committee	Predicted Expenditure 2021/22
F&P	374,726
A&OS	276,068
Property	246,469
Planning	12,500
Total predicted expenditure	<u>909,763</u>

INCOME

Committee	Predicted Income 2021/22
F&P	2,600
A&OS	41,450
Property	121,340
Planning	
Total predicted income	<u>£165,390</u>

This gives a precept calculation as follows:

	Precept Calculation 2021/22
Total Planned Expenditure	909,763
Less Total Planned Income	165,390
Net Expenditure to be funded	744,373
Precept	744,373
Tax Base*	3,476.60
Tax per Band D Property	£214.11

**The Tax Base is the average number of Band D properties within a town/parish. It is used to calculate the Band D charge for each town/parish. This is done by dividing the total precept requirement by the tax base.*

At this stage, committee recommendations to meet a precept requirement of **£744,373** would equate to a precept rise of **3.75%** and an annual Band D figure of **£214.11**

Further Savings - To reduce this further Members would need to find savings as follows:

Percentage Rise	Precept Figure	Further Savings Required	Band D
3%	738,986.10	£5,386.90	£212.56
2.99%	738,916.56	£5,456.44	£212.54
2.75%	737,213.03	£7,159.97	£212.05
2.5%	735,405.20	£8,967.80	£211.53
2.25%	733,597.37	£10,775.63	£211.10
2%	731,824.30	£12,548.70	£210.50

5. Tax Base

Members will want to be aware that there has been a reduction in our Tax Base for 2021/22 due to the impact of COVID so more people qualify for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTR). This means that to just to stand still so the Town Council can raise the same amount in precept as the current year, the Band D rate will need to rise by £1.67 an increase of 0.81%.

2020/21 - Tax Base - 3,504.70 - Precept Requirement - £723,527 – Band D - £206.37
2021/22 - Tax Base - 3,476.60 - Precept Requirement - £723,527 – Band D - £208.04

6. Community Asset Transfers and Devolution of Services

For the last 18 months to 2 years, MTC has been working towards devolution of services and asset transfers from Wiltshire Council. Responding to a question from the Mayor at the Area Board meeting in September, Wiltshire Councillor Clewer indicated that towns would be contacted within weeks. No contact has been made. The Town Clerk has written to WC asking for an update. We do know that a number of town councils are in the same position. There is currently £46,000 in EMR towards devolution.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The current balance of CIL in EMR is **£27,132**. This has not been broken down in the budget line but there are already agreed ring fenced funds within that:

Skatepark Lighting	£10,000
Additional funding for Jubilee Field	£ 1,000

This leaves an unallocated CIL balance of £16,132. Proposals have been made about how this balance could be used to legitimately fund projects rather than them be funded via the precept - a contribution towards the building of a bridge at Stonebridge Meadow (£7,500), a contribution to the final stages of the Neighbourhood Plan (£2,000) and fencing at Tin Pit (£5,000). These proposals will be submitted to Full Council for agreement on 18 January.

8. Other Wiltshire Town Council Precepts for 2020/21 (current FY)

These include:

TOWN COUNCIL	2020/21	% OVER 2019/20
Chippenham	£262.05	9.37%
Bradford on Avon	£216.90	17%
Calne	£215.57	2.5%
Malmesbury	£210.63	2.5%
Royal Wootton Bassett	£209.81	2.44%
Salisbury	£208.00	0%
Marlborough	£206.57	5.76%
Cricklade	£203.79	3.5%
Corsham	£199.09	17.99%
Devizes	£176.11	11.52%
Trowbridge	£164.98	7.14%
Melksham	£160.45	4.78%

9. Marlborough's Precept Rises

Precept rises in last 5 years:

Year	% Rise over previous year	Band D figure
2020/21	5.76%	£206.37
2019/20	3.81%	£195.13
2018/19	2.91%	£187.97
2017/18	16.55%	£182.67
2016/17	4.96%	£156.73

In terms of precept sizes in England for 2019/20, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) placed Marlborough in the 60 highest town and parishes Band D precepts in England. (Comparisons have not yet been released for 2020/21).

10. Project Plan 2017 - 2021

This is at: https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/images/your-council/Action_Plan_Review_Sept_2019.pdf This should be updated and presented perhaps at the January FTC meeting. A lot has been achieved – taking on and refurbishing of the Youth and Community Centre, completion of the CCTV project, new play areas at Coopers Meadow and Jubilee Field, new public toilets, re-jig of the basement of the Town Hall for storage, a Puppet Festival, a Civil War Re-enactment, a weekend’s worth of WW1 commemorations. Due for completion before the end of the Council term are the Skatepark lighting and the Neighbourhood Plan. Some things didn’t come off and were out of our control – for example residents car park at Kelham Gardens (WC sold to another buyer), WW2 commemorations, scuppered by COVID. (lots of other things outside of this plan too– e.g., 3 Christmas Lights Switch-ons, success at In Bloom, all the day to day services we provide).

Big projects with a foot in both existing and new council terms are likely to be – the external works to the Town Hall, the Workshop at The Common, repurposing of the workshop at the Recreation Ground and the taking on of land and play facilities at Rabley Wood.

11. Ear Marked Reserves

Towards the end of the FY, it is possible to better predict the budget surplus we are able to vire into ear mark reserves (to help towards ongoing projects) and general reserves.

Town Clerk’s Recommendations

The Town Clerk recommends that Members:

- i) Consider the draft expenditure budget for the Finance and Policy Committee including the recommendation from the Staffing Sub-Committee
- ii) Review proposed expenditure budgets for the Property, A&OS and Planning Committees
- iii) Agree a recommendation to Full Town Council for a final decision on budgets and a precept figure on 18 January 2021.

Town Clerk

6 January 2021

Museum and Heritage

Summary - This report asks Members to consider contributing, via the Museum & Heritage budget line, to the Town Museum.

1. Background

The Town Museum is run by a separate 8 member Museum Management Committee reporting to The Merchant's House Trust. (Cllrs Cooper and Price were nominated members in March 2020 (Min.531/19)). It has a standalone Terms of Reference (ToR) and a bank account of its own.

Due to the pandemic, the museum has been closed and likely to open again to the public in autumn 2021. Ahead of this, work needs to be done around exhibits and related equipment.

2. Financial Contribution and Implications

It is suggested that £1,000 is paid to the Town Museum from the dedicated Heritage and Museum budget line. This is the balance remaining. Members will also want to be aware that there is an ear marked reserve of £17,000 set aside for Museum and Heritage projects.

Town Clerk's Recommendations

The Town Clerk recommends that Members agree to £1,000 being paid to the Town Museum.

Town Clerk

7 January 2021