

FULL COUNCIL

Date: Monday 8 January 2024

Title: To Formally Declare the Precept 2024/25

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Background

The purpose of this report is to outline the formal recommendation which the Council will need to approve to give the Town Clerk the authority to serve this precept.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Proper and sound financial management is necessary as all Councillors are collectively responsible for the budget, particularly expenditure and ensuring it is expended lawfully and in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

The Responsible Financial Officer advises accordingly, in line with Financial Regulations and Statute.

Financial implications

These have been detailed during the budget cycle, as well as in the previous agenda item. The estimated tax base for 202 is 11,213.75 Band D equivalent properties.

The current Band D council tax is £166.83 per annum.

In order to balance the budget (i.e. meet the net expenditure requirement without drawing on general reserves), a 12.73% increase would be required, resulting in a Band D charge of £188.87. This would raise £2,108,927 by way of precept.

The Council has general reserves available which the Council may consider drawing on to fund part of the budget. However, Members should exercise caution in this regard as drawing on

reserves is not sustainable longer-term. The attached funding spreadsheet shows a number of scenarios ranging from a 12.73% increase in Council Tax which would not require any contribution from reserves through to a 0% Council Tax increase requiring a contribution of £238,137 from reserves.

Note that the Council Tax was last increased in April 2022. So, if it is increased in April 2024, it will have been two years since an increase has been applied. During the period April 2022 to November 2023 the RPI (Retail Prices Index) has increased by 12.8%; if a full two-year period is calculated to the latest RPI, i.e. a period from November 2021 to November 2023 then the increase is 20.0%.

Recommendations

Members are invited:

1. To note the report.
2. To agree the precept for 2024/25.
3. Authorise the Town Clerk to sign and serve a precept on the West Oxfordshire District Council, in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), requiring the District Council to pay the Town Council the sum agreed at 2 (above) in respect of Council Tax for the town during the financial year 2024-25.