

**MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 16 December 2019**

**At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

**Present:**

Councillor D Enright (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	V Gwatkin
	L Ashbourne	A D Harvey
	T Ashby	M Jones
	R Bolger	A McMahon
	D Butterfield	A Prosser
	O Collins	R Smith
	L Duncan	D Temple
Officers:	Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
Others:	0 members of the public.	

505 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Eaglestone and King.

506 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest to in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

507 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present for this item.

508 **COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET: REVISED BUDGET 2019/20 AND ESTIMATE 2020/21**

The Town Clerk gave a presentation to Council on possible options for the budget and the implications of each of these. This included a table demonstrating the effect on a Band D property's council tax. The presentation is attached to these minutes.

The options were to not increase the precept, meaning that everything would need to be paid for out of reserves, which was not advised, and three further options to use part of the reserves and varying increases to the precept.

The Chair clarified that the revenue budget was that paying for services to continue, which was in effect committed expenditure. The capital expenditure was for “one of” items and as such the projects could be timed. The Town Clerk commented that projects could be prioritised.

Members asked questions about the revised revenue budget and engaged in an in-depth discussion.

*Cllr Temple left the meeting at 7.31pm.*

**RESOLVED:** that the presentation (as attached) and reports from the Town Clerk be noted.

509 **CAPITAL & SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS PROGRAMME: REVISED 2019/20, PROPOSED 2020/21 AND BEYOND**

The Council received and considered reports from the Town Clerk, including a schedule of the Capital/Special Revenue Projects Programme 2020/21, as attached.

Members noted that these were items that the public had asked for and that had been agreed through the Committee system.

In order to pay for them and not use up all of the Council’s reserves, members understood that the precept would need to be increased.

A lengthy debate followed, during which some members expressed a preference to keep the precept at a low level, whilst others argued that this low level of investment had led to facilities in the town declining and in need of major investment now. Councillors agreed that it would not be prudent to lean too heavily on the Council’s reserves, but had reservations about increasing the precept to 14% to fully fund revenue and capital expenditure.

**RESOLVED:** that the reports and presentation (as attached) from the Town Clerk be noted.

510 **TO FORMALLY DECLARE THE PRECEPT FOR 2020/21**

The Mayor asked members if, having heard the presentation from the Town Clerk, considered her reports and engaged in debate, they were ready to decide on the level of precept for 2020/21. Members voted on this with 8 in favour of this and 5 against. The Mayor did not vote.

A member proposed setting the increase to the precept at 10%. Members voted on this with 10 members voting in favour, 3 members voting against and 1 member abstaining.

*Cllr Collins left the meeting at 8.45pm.*

It was therefore agreed that the precept should be increased by 10% for 2020/21, and that the Town Clerk should sign and serve the precept on the West Oxfordshire District Council of £1, 628, 699 in respect of Council Tax for the town.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Clerk be authorised 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 of £1, 628, 699 in respect of Council Tax for the town during the financial year 2020/21.

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The meeting closed at: 8.50 pm

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Chair