

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY JANUARY 10TH 2023

ITEM NO: 17 – Consideration of the 2022/23 Precept request to NFDC

At the December 13th 2022 meeting (agenda item 16 – minute 211/22) I presented to the Council, on behalf of the Finance Advisory Committee, a suggested spending budget for 2023/24 of £25,779. This budget was approved by the Council as presented.

The funding requirement of £25,779, if covered fully by precept, would mean an increase in the Parish Council Precept for 2023/24 of £1,164 over the Precept set for 2022/23.

NFDC have supplied to us the 2023/24 “Tax Base” for the Parish of Copythorne - which was approved by them on December 12th 2022 - which is the equivalent of 1219.90 Band D properties (a decrease of 3.2 Band D properties over 2022/23).

The £1,164 increase equates to an extra £1.00 per annum (99p pa in 2022/23) for a Band D property or roughly 52p per annum per registered elector. It takes the Copythorne Parish precept from £20.13 to £21.13 for a Band D property.

At the lowest end a “Band A” property would pay 67% of this increase (67p per annum), at the highest end a “Band H” property would pay 200% of this increase (£2.00 per annum).

It remains the case that no Government cap applies currently on Town/Parish Council percentage increases. There is no guarantee that this will continue and for Councils such as Copythorne who start from a very low Precept value, in part due to historical decision making in respect of past Precept calculations, any cap could make it very difficult for the Council to raise funding to cover projects and costs in the future, as our administration costs would progressively rise, consuming the majority of the budget, leaving no funds for any development activity.

Last year, the Council approved a budget of £24,615 all of which was covered by Precept.

The Council’s General Reserves as at December 31st 2022 stood at £9,653. Our Internal Auditor suggests for a council of our size General Reserves should be maintained at between 33% to 50% of the annual budget. Currently ours stand towards the lower end of this recommended range at 37% of the proposed 2023/24 Budget. Therefore, as Responsible Financial Officer of the Council, I do not feel that any of the approved 2023/24 Budget should be covered by a transfer from General Reserves.

Recommendation

That Council approves the submission to NFDC of a 2023/24 Precept request of £25,779.

David Rigby, Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
December 16th 2022