

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY DECEMBER 12th 2023

ITEM NO: 11 – Consideration of the 2024/25 Precept request to NFDC

Consideration of this item is predicated on the assumption that under Agenda Item 10 of this meeting the members agreed to a suggested spending budget for 2024/25 of £28,859 of which £27,059 was to be covered by Precept.

The Precept funding requirement of £27,059 would mean an increase in the Parish Council Precept for 2024/25 of £1,280 over the £25,779 Precept set for 2023/24.

NFDC have supplied to us the provisional 2024/25 “Tax Base” for the Parish of Copythorne - which is the equivalent of 1,235.70 Band D properties, an increase of 15.80 Band D properties over 2023/24.

(Note, this increase in Band D properties is not a reflection of additional properties in the parish but a change to the expected number of existing properties paying Council Tax in 2024/25.)

The £1,280 increase in Precept for 2024/25 equates to an extra 77p per annum (£1.00 pa in 2023/24) for a Band D property or roughly 40p per annum per registered elector. It takes the Copythorne Parish precept from £21.13 per annum to £21.90 per annum for a Band D property.

At the lowest end a “Band A” property would pay 67% of this increase (52p per annum), at the highest end a “Band H” property would pay 200% of this increase (£1.54 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 £27,059 all of which was covered by Precept.

The Council’s General Reserves as at November 30th 2023 stood at £10,868. 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 just under 38% of the proposed 2024/25 Budget. Therefore, as Responsible Financial Officer of the Council, I do not feel that any of the approved 2024/25 Budget should be covered by a transfer from General Reserves.

Recommendation

That Council approves the submission to NFDC of a 2024/25 Precept request of £27,059.

David Rigby, Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
December 4th 2023