

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY DECEMBER 10th 2024

ITEM NO: 13 – Consideration of the 2025/26 Precept request to NFDC

Consideration of this item is predicated on the assumption that under Agenda Item 12 of this meeting the members agreed to a suggested spending budget for 2025/26 of £30,265 of which £28,365 was to be covered by Precept.

The Precept funding requirement of £28,365 would mean an increase in the Parish Council Precept for 2025/26 of £1,306 over the £27,059 Precept set for 2024/25.

NFDC have supplied to us the provisional 2025/26 “Tax Base” for the Parish of Copythorne - which is the equivalent of 1,236.90 Band D properties, an increase of 1.20 Band D properties over 2024/25.

(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 2025/26.)

The £1,306 increase in Precept for 2025/26 equates to an extra £1.03 per annum (77p pa in 2024/25) for a Band D property or roughly 58p per annum per registered elector. It takes the Copythorne Parish precept from £21.90 per annum to £22.93 per annum for a Band D property.

At the lowest end a “Band A” property would pay 67% of this increase (69p per annum), at the highest end a “Band H” property would pay 200% of this increase (£2.06 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 £28,859, of which £27,059 was covered by Precept.

The Council’s General Reserves as at November 30th 2024 stood at £11,371. 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 stands at the lower end of this recommended range at just under 38% of the proposed 2025/26 Budget. Therefore, as Responsible Financial Officer of the Council, I do not feel that any of the approved 2025/26 Budget should be covered by a transfer from General Reserves.

Recommendation

That Council approves the submission to NFDC of a 2025/26 Precept request of £28,365.

**David Rigby,
Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer
Copythorne Parish Council
December 2nd 2024**