

To all Members of Newbury Town Council

Re: Budget 2018-19

From Councillor Adrian Edwards, Leader of the Council

As Leader of the Council, I am pleased to present for the first time a draft budget for your consideration.

The Council remains in a healthy financial position and this budget continues to exercise careful financial management, while at the same time meeting the various challenges we face in dealing with current Local Government finances.

As well as the various issues raised in the attached note from the RFO, the draft budget, as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee on 15 January, contains the following provisions for your approval:

- £12,000 to continue to support the Christmas Lights events provided by Newbury BID
- Increased grants allocations from £10,000 to £15,000, as recommended by the Grants Subcommittee and a further allocation of £10,000 for grants and support for Youth work, making an overall total of £25,000
- Increasing the West Berkshire Citizens' Advice Bureau grant to £20,000
- £12,000 provision towards CCTV in the Town Centre
- The maintenance and upkeep of the Town Hall requires considerable expenditure. This year we paid for new flooring and furniture, before emergency works were required to deal with damp proofing heating repairs and the installation of new lightning conductors. The draft budget includes provision of £5,200 for redecorating the Council Chamber and setting up a new fund for repointing the brick and stonework of the Town Hall. £6,000 is provided in this draft budget and we need to raise £18,000 to £26,000 for this project
- However, there is some good news regarding the Town Hall as all of the suites are now let and we forecast increased income.
- The successful Victoria Park Family Day is to become an annual event and there is provision for £2,125 to support this.
- We have a new grounds maintenance contract in place from 8 January 2018. This is a joint contract with West Berkshire District Council which we expect to provide increased efficiencies with improved service, arising from economies of scale and collaborating with our partners in West Berkshire District Council. The overall cost of the contract is estimated at £288,690 for 2018-19, compared to this year's budget provision of £297,681. (These costs are apportioned over the various services)
- The draft budget includes an ambitious Capital programme to fund the Victoria Park Café and Changing rooms. It also provides for the Shaw Cemetery disabled toilet, the Newtown Road Cemetery Chapel window, the St. John's Corner perimeter wall and expenditure on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) projects to the value of £75,000.

The Policy and Resources Committee deferred for decision to Full Council the following items included in the in the attached draft budget:

- A further contribution of £31,275 towards the Library Service
- The draft budget provision of £11,743 for continuing support for Visitor Information (£9,743 salary re-allocation and £2,000 materials and supplies)

The draft budget, as attached, would require a funding provision (precept) of £1,043,032, an increase of 2.31%. However, as the Council Tax Base in the Town Council area has increased by 2.36% the Band D Council Tax equivalent would actually drop by 4 pence per annum, from £79.16 to £79.12 per annum. (These amounts are subject to change, depending on the Council's decisions regarding the Library Service contribution and the Visitor Information service.

Councillor Adrian Edwards.

Leader of the Council

23 January 2018