

Conservative group budget proposal for 2022/23

1. Freeze the council tax

It has been a difficult couple of years for residents dealing with the pandemic and on top of that the increase in household bills particularly those relating to heating and fuel costs has hit people hard. It is proposed to freeze the council tax at 2021/22 levels to assist residents struggling to meet their living costs. The income forgone in 2022/23 as a result will be around £327,000 but will also have an ongoing effect on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

2. Additional resources to tackle the increase in fly tipping and Envirocrime.

Fly Tipping is becoming an increasing problem both nationally and locally and it is felt that more resources need to be provided to tackle this. It is proposed that an additional officer costing around £42,000 be employed to not only assist in the enforcement activity related to this but also carry out prevention campaigns and education activities in an effort to minimise fly tipping in the first place.

3. Additional funding for fraud prevention and investigation

Local Authorities have in recent years seen increasing amounts of attempted fraud against them and if anything the Pandemic has seen this sort of activity increase further and due to the various lockdowns the Council has been prevented from completing ongoing investigations meaning a backlog has occurred. It is proposed to invest £100,000 in the service for further investigation capacity and provide funding for fraud prevention campaigns. These campaigns could include raising fraud awareness in the community and in schools in line with what some other Council's are doing.

4. Additional planning enforcement officer

There is a need to bolster resources in the planning enforcement team and it is proposed to add an additional officer to the establishment at a cost of £42,000 to provide the growing demand to investigate breaches of planning conditions and consent.

5. Funding

It is proposed that the amount required of £511,000 be funded in part from a saving by discontinuing with the situation where more than one Special Responsibility Allowance is paid to a particular member, this will save around £14,000. The remaining difference (£497,000) will be met from the removal of that amount from the transformation reserve.

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