
Report from Finance Advisory Group Chairman

Preparation of the BPC Budget and Precept application for funding in 2023-24

Stage 1: Baseline – anticipated outturn for 2022-23

Work has been undertaken to predict, as far as is possible, the anticipated end of year cash position for 2022-23. The conclusion of that review is that we are operating within the budget set for the year and anticipating a balance or small surplus which will support BPC Reserves for future activities.

The delivery of a number of infrastructure projects have been helped by using funds from the Lucks Lane development Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Some of this CIL remains potentially available, although how much will depend significantly on the final contribution that BPC will need to make towards the Buckden-Brampton Cycleway improvement project.

Stage 2: Building the budget for 2023-24

The budget for Buckden Parish Council must be prepared and agreed by Council before the Parish Clerk can submit the request for the Precept to Hunts DC in mid-December 2022.

The first stages of budget preparation were initiated, as is usual, in September with a request to all Advisory Group and Committee Chairmen to submit their 2023-24 budget proposals to the Clerk who is also our Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), copied to the Chairman of the Finance Advisory Group. The deadline for receipt of the proposals was 19th October 2022.

The proposals for the Group/Committee proposals were then loaded into the BPC finance system, including all those proposals and the judgement of the Clerk on the anticipated funding requirements for other budget headings, particularly for Administration and Subscriptions to support the effective operation of BPC.

The anticipated 2023-24 costs for BPC staffing, including pensions, National Insurance and essential travel costs were calculated using expected changes for the next financial year. Salaries for all BPC staff are on the national scales and T&C negotiated by the Local Government Association.

At this stage conservative estimates of 2023-24 income have been made, as it is difficult to predict how future economic circumstances may affect Income from bank interest, allotments, cemetery, roundabout and work for other organisations.

The first draft of the full budget, showing all proposals has been discussed with the majority of Group/Committee chairmen by the Chairman of the Finance AG and the Clerk.

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Stage 3: Review and amendment of the proposed budget 2023-24

The full detail¹ of the draft budget will be presented at the November Council meeting by the Finance Advisory Group Chairman and Clerk for the full Council to review and comment on the impact of the combined proposals on total planned expenditure.

This review and discussion will include the anticipated change in BPC Precept between years and how this might be modified by changing elements in the budget e.g. by use of CIL or reserves or amending proposed activities.

Stage 4: Finalising the I&E Budget and Precept request

Decisions made by the Council at the November meeting will be incorporated in the final draft to await information from HDC on the number of Band-D Equivalent properties to be used in calculating the BPC element in the overall Council Tax for 2023-24.

The budget and the requested Precept will be finalised in December in line with Council decisions and direction once that number is known. That will then be reported to Council and the Precept request submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council no later than their deadline.

Proposal: That the budget (as agreed following discussion at the November 2022 Council meeting) is adopted, subject to reporting to Council at its December meeting of final year-on-year change, as it is expected by then Hunts DC will have published the number of Band-D-equivalent dwellings in the Buckden and Diddington Parish which they will use to calculate the change in BPC Precept 2023-24.

¹ Detail of staff salaries and associated costs remain confidential.

They are subject to review by the members of the Staffing AG.

Individual Councillors who wish to discuss this confidential information should in the first instance contact the Chairman of Finance AG.