

Council Meeting	
Meeting Date	22 nd February 2023
Report Title	Budget and Council Tax for 2023/24
EMT Lead	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources
Head of Service	Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Lead Officer	Lisa Fillery, Director of Resources Claire Stanbury, Head of Finance and Procurement
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That members note the Director of Resources opinion on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves. 2. That minute number 632 of the Policy and Resources committee on 8 February 2023 on the report on the Medium Term Financial Plan and the 2023/24 revenue and capital budgets be approved. 3. That the resolutions contained in Appendix I be approved. 4. That in accordance with the proposals contained within SI 2014 No. 165 that a recorded vote be taken on the 2023/24 Budget and Council Tax.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 At their meeting on 8 February 2023, Policy and Resources Committee recommended the 2023/24 Revenue Budget, the Capital Programme for 2023/24 to 2026/27, and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2023/24.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is for the Council to approve the Council Tax Requirement, Revenue Budget and Capital Programme, and Council Tax for the year 2023/24 as set out in the report to the Policy and Resources Committee on 8 February 2023, subject to any amendments, and to approve the Council Tax Resolutions set out in Appendix I.
- 1.3 This report reflects the latest information available for the preceptors at the time of writing (13 February 2023). Should there be any changes to these, members will be informed.

2 Background

- 2.1 As part of the 2023/24 budget setting process, the Policy and Resources Committee first received a report on the budget proposals for 2023/24 and an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan on 30 November 2022. The draft budget, following public consultation, was then considered again by Policy and Resources Committee on 8 February 2023.
- 2.2 The final settlement published on 6 February 2023 confirmed the grants from Central Government. There is a £7k increase to the services grant, but this is offset by a £7k decrease in the funding guarantee grant, resulting in no change to the overall position.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Council's Section 151 Officer is required to report formally to the Council on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the reserves. It should be noted that Section 26 of the Act gives the Secretary of State power to set a minimum level of reserves for which an authority must provide in setting its budget. The Section 151 Officer (the Director of Resources), in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, hereby has confirmed her opinion that the 2023/24 budget submitted is robust and that the reserves are reasonable given an assessment of risks. The medium term savings requirement will need to be addressed in 2023/24 with a robust savings plan as it is not sustainable to continue to rely on significant transfers from reserves to support the base budget position. The budget report to Policy and Resources committee on 8 February 2023 set out the background to this opinion.
- 3.2 All councils have to provide the Government with a forecast for their business rates to be collected for the forthcoming financial year (NNDR1), which has a statutory deadline of 31 January. For 2023/24 the Council part of the Kent Business Rate Pool and the NNDR1 forms for the other Pool authorities are being collated and any significant changes will be reported to members as part of the monitoring reports during 2023/24.
- 3.3 The Town and Parish Council Precepts for 2023/24 are detailed in Appendix I and total £1,729,573. The increase in the average Band D Council Tax for parished areas is 2.66% and results in the average Band D Council Tax for parishes of £51.98 for 2023/24 (£34.82 including those areas of the borough which are unparished).
- 3.4 As well as its own Council Tax, Swale Borough Council collects on behalf of the other 'precepting authorities', i.e. Kent County Council, the Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority, and the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

- 3.5 At the time of writing this report, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue Authority were due to meet on 21 February 2023. This report is based upon a precept of £4,336,493 which results in a Band D Council Tax of £87.30 (6.01% or £4.95 increase).
- 3.6 The Police and Crime Panel met on 1 February 2023 to consider the budget proposals from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner. The decision was for a precept of £12,078,102 which results in a Band D Council Tax of £243.15 (6.57% or £15.00 increase).
- 3.7 Kent County Council met on 9 February 2023 and set their precept at £76,210,513 resulting in a Band D Council Tax of £1,534.23 (4.9951% or £72.99 increase including the Adult Social Care precept).
- 3.8 Appendix II provides more detail on the calculation of the Council Tax requirement and a summary of the calculation of Band D Council Tax.
- 3.9 Appendix III is the Budget report submitted to Policy and Resources committee on 8 February 2023. Please note that the report referred to the Regeneration and Levelling Up Bill. It is actually the Levelling Up and Regeneration bill, so this has been updated.
- 3.10 The charge of a council tax premium is an in principle decision for when and if the bill is approved.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 Do nothing – this is not recommended as the Council is legally required to set a balanced budget.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The budget proposals were reported to Policy and Resources Committee on the 30th of November 2022.
- 5.2 An online budget consultation exercise took place from 2nd December 2022 to 13th January 2023, the results of which were reported to Policy and Resources committee on 8 February 2023.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The budget proposals support the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities.

Financial, Resource and Property	The report sets out the Council's resourcing position.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Council is required to set a Council Tax and a balanced budget.
Crime and Disorder	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The proposals support the Climate Change and Ecological motion previously agreed.
Health and Wellbeing	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Equality and Diversity	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.
Privacy and Data Protection	Any potential implications will be addressed by service managers in their budget proposals.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Council Tax Resolutions
- Appendix II: (i) Council Tax Requirement 2023/24
(ii) Calculation of Band D Council Tax 2023/24
- Appendix III: Budget report to Policy and Resources Committee 8 February 2023.

8 Background Papers

8.1 As detailed in the budget report to the Policy and Resources committee on 8 February 2023.