Sandbach Town Council 6.12.23

2024-25 Budget Recommendations

Introduction

Under the Council's scheme of delegation, Finance, Policy and Governance Committee is required to make a recommendation to Full Council regarding the Council's 2024-25 spending plans and precept. This report contains those recommendations and supporting information.

Tax Base and Band D Equivalent

Cheshire East Council has informed the Town Council that its taxbase has marginally increased from 2023-24 as follows:

2023-24 Taxbase: 8,857

2024-25 Taxbase: 8,992

In 2023-24 the Council set a precept of £732,380 after using £15,910 of its general reserves resulting in a Council Tax Band D rate of £82.69, which constituted a zero increase from the previous year.

Council Reserve levels

In 2022, the Council agreed a Reserves Policy. This policy sets the parameters of acceptable general reserve levels which should be no higher than its net expenditure budget. In 2023-24, the Council's level of general reserves was £440K and its net expenditure budget was £732K. It is the advice of the Chief Officer and Responsible Finance Officer that Sandbach Town Council's general reserves should remain around £500K, due to the profile of its asset base and activities.

In addition to general reserves, the Council has a number of Earmarked Reserves, committed for a specific purpose. Earmarked reserves were fundamentally reviewed in 2022 and are now updated every year.

Full Council Informal Meeting 8.11.23

As in every year, all Councillors were invited to an informal budget briefing where a baseline budget was presented and all assumptions were explained. Members discussed a number of issues including staffing pressures, new and existing policy proposals, inflation factors, cost reviews and additional services which may affect the budget. Resolutions from the latest Personnel and Assets & Services Committees were also considered.

The Chief Officer was asked to formulate a draft budget based on these discussions, to be debated in full at the FPG Committee, and to resolve what would be recommended to Council for its 2024-25 budget.

The following amendments have been made to the 'baseline' budget and included in the proposed budget to Full Council, recommended by Finance, Policy and Governance Committee which was agreed unanimously in a named vote.

- 1) An increase in the revenue budget to fund a sustainable staffing structure including a part time bought in Ranger;
- 2) An increase in the revenue budget to fund replacement Green Space Maintenance following the proposed reduction in service from CEC;
- 3) A transfer to general reserves of £47,514;
- 4) Adjustments to, and the creation of, specific Earmarked Reserves for the purposes set out in Appendix 3;
- 5) The use of general reserves of approximately £20K to limit a Council tax band D equivalent to around 5%.

Supporting Information

In order to make an informed decision, members have been provided with the following information, which is in line with ChALC guidance:

Appendix 1: Draft baseline budget adjusted following discussions at the Informal budget briefing;

Appendix 2: Predicted expenditure and income plans against 2023-24 (current) budget.

Appendix 3: Level of general and earmarked reserves available to the Council, before and after recommended transfers;

Delegated Authority

It is proposed that delegated authority to the Chief Officer in consultation with the STC Climate Change lead, the Mayor and the Chair of Finance, Policy & Governance, for the allocation of the Climate Change Pump Priming Earmarked Reserve, is approved, to expedite external funding and grant opportunities.

Recommended that:

- i) Following the recommendations from Finance, Policy & Governance Committee at its meeting on 22 November 2023, Council approves the following:
 - 2024-25 net expenditure level £792,182
 - A 2024-25 precept level of £772,182, following use of £20,000 general reserves to mitigate the annual increase;
 - Adjustments to Earmarked Reserves as shown in Appendix 3;
 - delegated authority to the Chief Officer, in consultation with the STC Climate Change lead, the Mayor and the Chair of Finance, Policy & Governance, for the allocation of the Climate Change Pump Priming Earmarked Reserve, to expedite external funding and grant opportunities when they arise;
 - Use of general reserves, whilst adhering to the Council's Reserves Policy, as shown in Appendix 3:
 - A Council Tax (Band D) rate of £86.84, representing a 5.02% increase on the previous year.

Code	•	2022-23 Budget	Inflation	Inflation Rate		2023-24 Budget	Adjustm ent	2023-24 Adjusted	Inflation Rate		2024-25 Draft	NOTES / FORECAST POINTS (CL)
		buugei		Rate		buugei	ent	budget	Rate	Amount	Budget	
		£	£		£	£	£	£		£	£	
101	Administration											
4100	Mayor's Allowance	2,000	-	-	-	2,000	500	2,500	-	-	2,500	
4101	Civic & Ceremonial	2,500	-	-		2,500		2,500	-	-	2,500	
4110	ICT Support	7,500	375	5		7,875		7,875	5	394	8,269	
4111	Subscriptions	4,000	200	5		4,200	-	4,200	5	210	4,410	
4112	Audit Fees	5,180	259	5		5,439		5,439	5	272	5,711	
4114	Accountancy Services	8,200	410	5		8,610	- 2,000	6,610	-	-	6,610	
4120	Insurance	10,000	-		5,000	15,000		15,000	5	750	15,750	
4123	Telephones	2,500	75	3		2,575		2,575	5	129	2,704	
4124	Internet		-					-		-	-	
4130	Stationery	1,000	100	10		1,100		1,100	5	55	1,155	
4131	Photocopying	1,000	-		500	1,500		1,500	5	75	1,575	
4135	Postages	400	-		- 200	200		200	5	10	210	
4136	Election Costs/Referendum Costs	8,000	-		- 8,000	-		-	-	-	-	Reserves
4141	Office Equipment/Furniture	3,000	-		1,000	4,000		4,000		-	4,000	
4142	Office Maintenance	500	-	-		500		500	-	-	500	
4145	Financial Software	1,100	55	5		1,155		1,155	5	58	1,213	
4150	Travelling Expenses	500	25	5		525		525	-	-	525	
4151	Training	4,000	-	-		4,000		4,000	-	-	4,000	
4152	HR & H&S Support	5,000	-			5,000		5,000	5	250	5,250	
4154	Aged Debt Write off	-	-		3,000	3,000		3,000	-	-	3,000	
4197	Bank Charges	2,500	-			2,500		2,500	-	-	2,500	
4199	Other Expenses	100	-			100		100	-	-	100	
4630	Legal Fees	1,500	-			1,500		1,500	-	-	1,500	
4670	New Purchases Projects	20,000	-		- 20,000	-		-	-	-	-	
6140	Waste Disposal	1,500	-	5		1,500		1,500	-	-	1,500	Under review - costs will decrease
6290	Advertising	1,000	50	5		1,050		1,050	-	-	1,050	
	NOTIONAL RENT (TOWN HALL)	-			50,000	50,000	- 25,000	25,000	-	-	25,000	Corporate Ioan share
	Rent (Enterprise)						20,000	20,000	-	-	20,000	Offset by Boardroom Hire Income
101	Administration Net Exp	92,980	1,549		31,300	125,829	- 6,500	119,329		2,202	121,531	
	Staff Costs											
	Salaries	145,400	21,810	15	48,005	215,215	23,209	238,424	5	10,761		Sustainable staff structure
	Employer's NI	15,700	2,355	15	4,505	22,560	338	22,898	5	1,128	24,026	
4002	Pension Contributions	32,900	4,935	15	10,809	48,644	2,872	51,516	5	2,432	53,948	

4003	Staff Review (contingency)	70,000	10,500	15	- 70,000	10,500	- 10,500	-	-	-	-	
	, , ,	·	·			·	•					Constant review for effectiveness
102	Staff Costs Net Exp	264,000	39,600	-	- 6,681	296,919	15,919	312,838		14,321	327,159	
	-											
105	Publicity											
4300	Newsletter Printing	2,500	-	-		2,500	-	2,500	-	-	2,500	
4310	Website Development	1,000	50	5		1,050	-	1,050		-	1,050	
4320	Town Guide		-			-	-	-		-	-	
105	Publicity Net Exp	3,500	50		-	3,550	-	3,550	-	-	3,550	
	-											
110	Grants/Discretionary Payments											
4500	Transport Festival (SLA)	12,000	-	-	6,000	18,000	-	18,000	-	-	18,000	3 Year Agreement - review 2024
4501	Town Crier Competition		-			-	-	-	-	-	-	
4503	Hanging Baskets (SLA)	8,500	-	-	4,000	12,500	-	12,500	5	625	13,125	
4508	Christmas Lights (SLA)	26,500	2,650	10		29,150	-	29,150	5	1,458	30,608	
4515	Concert Series (SLA)	3,500	-	-		3,500	-	3,500	-	-	3,500	
4530	Community Grants	30,000	-	-	- 2,500	27,500	2,500	30,000	5	1,375	31,375	
	Small Grants		-	-	2,500	2,500	- 2,500	-		-	-	
4550	Foden's Sponsorship	7,500	-	-		7,500	-	7,500	-	-	7,500	
4551	Town Crier Honorarium	750	-	-		750	-	750	-	-	750	
4560	Churchyard Maintenance (SLA)	1,580	79	5		1,659	-	1,659	-	-	1,659	
4573	Woodland & Wildlife (SLA)	2,000	100	5		2,100	-	2,100	-	-	2,100	
4599	Other Donations	300	-			300	-	300	-	-	300	
4601	Sandbach Partnership	10,000	-		- 10,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	
4611	Remembrance Parade: RBL Sandba	2,000	-		1,500	3,500	-	3,500	5	175	3,675	
4640	CCTV Contribution (CEC Contract)	5,750	288	5		6,038	-	6,038	5	302	6,339	3 year Contract Review - Dec 2023
4660	Allotments	1,000	-	-		1,000	-	1,000	-	-	1,000	
4666	Clean Team (SLA)	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	-	
110	Grants / Disc Net Exp	111,380	3,117		1,500	115,997		115,997		3,934	119,931	
140	Community Events											
4820	Community Events (General)	20,500	1,025	5	2,500	24,025	-	24,025	-	-	24,025	Review
	Xmas Market					-	12,000	12,000	-	-	12,000	from market o/a
	Community Events - Expenditure	20,500	1,025	-	2,500	24,025	12,000	36,025	-	-	36,025	
	Ticket Income (PIP)					-	5,000	5,000	-	-	5,000	
	Xmas Market Income					-	3,000	3,000	-	-	3,000	from market o/a
	Community Events - Income	-				-	8,000	8,000		-	8,000	

140	Events Net Exp over Income	20,500	1,025		2,500	24,025	4,000	28,025	-	-	28,025	
	·							·				
180	Sandbach Town Hall											
4670	New project/purchases	3,000	-			3,000	-	3,000	5	150	3,150	
6020	Town Hall Salaries	65,200	9,780	15	14,091	89,071	-	89,071	5	4,454	93,525	
6021	Employers NIC	4,500	675	15	- 646	4,529	-	4,529	5	226	4,755	
6022	Pension Contributions	9,300	1,395	15	6,360	17,055	-	17,055	5	853	17,908	
6070	Training	1,500	75	5		1,575	-	1,575	-	-	1,575	
6080	Routine Maintenance	8,000	400	5		8,400		8,400	5	420	8,820	
6090	H&S	500	-			500	-	500	-	-	500	
6091	Covid-19	1,000	-		- 1,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	
6100	Light and Heat	19,000	3,800	20		22,800	-	22,800	-	-	22,800	
6110	Rates and Water	12,000	600	5		12,600	-	12,600	5	630	13,230	
6120	General Repairs	5,000	-	-	5,000	10,000	-	10,000	5	500	10,500	Earmarked Reserve for major works
6124	Condition survey	2,380	-	-	- 2,380	-	-	-	-	-	-	Replaced by maint & earmarked reserve
6140	Waste Disposal	2,000	100	5		2,100	-	2,100	-	-	2,100	Under review - costs will decrease
6150	Security	500	25	5		525	-	525	-	-	525	
6220	Cleaning	13,500	1,013	8		14,513	- 4,000	10,513	5	726	11,238	To be reallocated
6230	Equipment renewals	3,000	-	-		3,000	-	3,000	5	150	3,150	Review
6280	Telephone	5,000	250	5		5,250	-	5,250	-	-	5,250	
6300	Performing Rights Licence	1,000	-	-		1,000	-	1,000	-	-	1,000	
6310	Premises Licence	2,500	-	-		2,500	-	2,500	-	-	2,500	
6340	Marketing	2,000	-	-		2,000	-	2,000	-	-	2,000	
6350	Irrecoverable VAT	6,250	-	-		6,250	-	6,250	-	-	6,250	As advised
7000	Public Works Loan Board	29,605	-	-		29,605	-	29,605	-	-	29,605	Annual commitment
											-	
180	Town Hall - Expenditure	196,735	18,113		21,425	236,273		232,273		7,958	240,381	
4831	Town Hall events costs	5,000	-		- 1,000	4,000	-	4,000	-	-	4,000	
4838	Cinema Cost	5,500	275	5		5,775	-	5,775	-	-	5,775	
4840	Refreshment purchases	4,000	200	5		4,200	-	4,200	-	-	4,200	
6010	Town Hall Bar Purchases	20,000	1,000	5		21,000	-	21,000	-	-	21,000	
180	Town Hall - Direct Expenditure	34,500	1,475		- 1,000	34,975	-	34,975		-	34,975	
	Ticket Income	8,000	-			8,000	-	8,000	5	400	8,400	
	Refreshment sales	8,000	-			8,000	-	8,000	-	-	8,000	
4807	Cinema Income	5,500	-			5,500	-	5,500	-	-	5,500	

6000	Town Hall hire fees - Commercial	60,000	-		- 10,000	50,000	10,000	60,000	5	2,500	62,500	BoardRoom hire additional income
	Town Hall hire fees - Community						-	-	5	-	-	
6002	Town Hall Bar Income	50,000	2,500	5		52,500	-	52,500	5	2,625	55,125	
	NOTIONAL RENT INCOME	-			50,000	50,000	- 25,000	25,000	-	-	25,000	Per above
180	Town Hall - Income	131,500	2,500		40,000	174,000	- 15,000	159,000		5,525	164,525	
180	Town Hall Net Exp over Income	99,735	17,088		- 19,575	97,248	15,000	108,248		2,433	110,831	
	Car Parks											
4619	Car Park refurbishment	10,000	-	-	- 10,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	
6080	Maintenance	500	-			500	-	500	-	-	500	
182	Car Parks Net Exp	10,500	-		- 10,000	500	-	500		-	500	
	Town Hall Shop Units											
	Shop Units Expenditure	1,500	-	-		1,500	-	1,500	-	-	1,500	
	Shop Units - Income	15,850	793	5		16,643	2,000	18,643	-	-	-	Elec Recharge incl / Valuer Review
184	Shop Units Net Exp over Income	- 14,350	- 793		-	- 15,143	2,000	- 17,143		-	- 17,143	
	Ranger											
	Salary	-	1,658	15	11,051	12,709	- 12,709	- 0	-	-	- 0	Review ranger service
	NI	-	44	15	294	338	- 338	0	-	-	0	
	Pensions	-	375	15	2,497	2,872	- 2,872	- 0	-	-	- 0	
	Equipment renewals	6,500	-	-		6,500	- 6,500	ı	-	-	-	
	Motor Expenses	1,000	-	-		1,000	- 1,000	ı	-	-	-	
	Bought in part time						25,000	25,000	-	-		Proposal for consideration
	Additional Green Space						15,000	15,000	-	-	15,000	Proposal for consideration
185	Ranger Net Exp	7,500	2,076		13,842	23,418	16,581	39,999		-	39,999	
	Outdoor Market											
		2.600	390	15	1 210	1,771		1,771	_	89	1 000	
	Employers NIC Superannuation/ Pension	2,600	1,020	15 15	- 1,219 - 2,978	4,842	-	4,842	5 5	242	1,860 5,084	
		6,800					-	-	5			
	Market wages	44,900	6,735	15	- 15,313	36,322		36,322		1,816	38,138 800	
	Training Maintenance	800	-	-	1.000	800	-	800	-			Former wheel December for manifest weather
		2,000	-	-	- 1,000	1,000	-	1,000	5	50		Earmarked Reserve for major works
	Health and Safety	450	-			450	-	450	-	-	450	
6100	Light and Heat	625	31	5		656	-	656	-	-	656	

6110	Rates and Water	8,250	413	5		8,663	- 1	8,663	-	-	8,663	
	Repairs	500	-		- 500	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Condition survey	5,390	-		- 5,390	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Waste Disposal	5,000	-	-	ŕ	5,000	-	5,000	-	-	5,000	Under review - costs will decrease
	Motor expenses	4,500	-	-	- 2,000	2,500	- 1,000	1,500	-	-	1,500	
6230	Equipment renewals	3,000	-	-	- 1,500	1,500	-	1,500	-	-	1,500	
6280	Telephone	175	9	5		184	-	184	-	-	184	
6290	Promotion/ Advertising	2,500	-		- 1,000	1,500	-	1,500	-	-	1,500	
6350	Irrecoverable VAT	1,000	-	-		1,000	-	1,000	-	-	1,000	
6352	Christmas Market Expenditure	6,000	-	-	3,000	9,000	- 9,000	-	-	ı	ı	Move to Events
190	Outdoor Market - Exp	94,490	8,598		- 27,900	75,188	- 10,000	65,188		2,197	67,384	
1905	Outdoor Market Rent Income	30,000	3,000	10	-	33,000	-	33,000	10	3,300	36,300	
	Christmas Market Income	5,000	-			5,000	- 5,000	-	-	-	-	
	Gazebo income	2,000	-			2,000	-	2,000	5	100	2,100	
190	Outdoor Market - Income	37,000	3,000		-	40,000	- 5,000	35,000		3,400	38,400	
190	Outdoor Mkt Net Exp over Income	57,490	5,598		- 27,900	35,188	- 5,000	30,188		- 1,203	28,984	
101												
	Indoor Market	4 222	405	4.5		4.556		4.556		70	4.655	
	Employers NIC	1,300	195	15	81 22	1,576	-	1,576	5 5	79	1,655	
	Pension Contributions	3,800	570	15		4,392	-	4,392	5	220	4,612	
	Market wages	16,000 260	2,400 13	15 5	911	19,311 273	-	19,311 273	5	966	20,277 273	
	Training Maintenance	800	13	5	1,200	2,000	-	2,000	-	-		Earmarked Reserve for major works
	Health and Safety	450	-	-	1,200	450	-	450	-	-	450	Earmarked Reserve for major works
	Light and Heat	7,500	375	- 5		7,875	-	7,875	- 5	394	8,269	
	Rates and Water	6,700	335	5		7,035	-	7,035	5	352	7,387	
	General repairs	1,600	-	-	- 1,600	- 7,033	-			-	- 7,367	
	Condition survey	1,400			- 1,000 - 1,400	-		-			<u> </u>	
	Waste Disposal	1,300	_	_	1,400	1,300	_	1,300	_	_	1,300	
	Cleaning	500	25	5		525	4,000	4,525	_	_	4,525	
	Equipment renewals	1,000				1,000	-	1,000	_	-		Earmarked Reserve for major one off items
	Telephone	100	5	5		105	- 105	-,550	-	-	-,550	
	Market Hall Advertising	2,500	-		1,500	4,000	- 2,000	2,000	-	-	2,000	
	Irrecoverable VAT	3,125	-		_,	3,125	-	3,125	-	-	3,125	
		-, -				-,		-,			-,	
191	Indoor Market - Expenditure	48,335	3,918		714	52,967	1,895	54,862		2,009	56,871	

	Indoor Market Rent income	35,000	3,500	10	5,000	43,500	-	43,500	10	4,350	47,850	
New Co	Recharge Electricity		-				1,000	1,000	-	-	1,000	
191	Indoor Market - Income	35,000	3,500		5,000	43,500	1,000	44,500	10	4,350	48,850	
	Indoor Mkt Net Exp over Income	13,335	418		- 4,286	9,467	895	10,362		- 2,341	8,021	
	Public Conveniences											
6100	Light and Heat	750	38	5		788	-	788	-	-	788	
6110	Rates and Water	600	30	5		630	-	630	-	-	630	
6120	Repairs	1,000	-	-		1,000	- 500	500	-	-	500	
6140	Waste Disposal	250	-	-		250	-	250	-	-	250	
6400	Supplies (Public Conveniences)	1,000	-	-		1,000	-	1,000	-	-	1,000	
6402	Vandalism Repairs	1,500	-		- 1,000	500	-	500	-	-	500	
6406	Contract Cleaning	16,500	825	5		17,325	-	17,325	-	-	17,325	Under Review
200	Public Conveniences Net Exp	21,600	893		- 1,000	21,493	- 500	20,993		-	20,993	
4667	Asset Maintenance Provision	10,000	-			10,000	-	10,000	-	-	10,000	As advised
4667	Capital Projects Exp	35,000	-		- 25,000	10,000	-	10,000			10,000	
1190	Interest	- 400			200	- 200	- 10,000	- 10,200		-	- 10,200	Increase in national interest rates
	Contingency (if agreed)	-			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
	Other Net Exp						- 10,000	- 10,200		-	- 10,200	
	Overall NET Budget	722,770	70,620		- 45,100	748,290	32,395	772,685		19,347	792,182	
	USE OF RESERVES					15,910					20,000	Proposal for consideration
	PRECEPT					732,380					772,182	
	Difference										39,802	
	Percentage Increase										5.02	
	Band D (Estimated)					82.69					86.84	
	Taxbase					8,856.94					8,892.13	