

Proposed amendment to budget 2018-19

Expenditure

1. Remove the proposed expenditure of £60,000 for “data protection resource”. This should not be necessary and no justification for it has been provided
2. Increase staff savings to £350,000 from present £250,000. There is already a saving of approximately £100,000 from removal of the corporate services director and a further £250,000 saving equates to a productivity gain of 4% which should be achievable.
3. Increase planning fee income by £50,000. In 5 of the last 6 years planning income has exceeded budget and the drive for housing plans to meet the needs of the local plan should lead us to expect further substantial planning application fees.

These proposals together reduce expenditure for the year 2018/19 by £210,000

Use of savings

4. Each 1% increase in Council Tax brings in £70,000. We propose reducing the Council Tax increase by 2% thus using up £140,000 of the proposed savings.
5. The remaining £70,000 of available savings should be used to reduce by £70,000 the amount taken from the General Fund.
- 6 These proposals leave a balanced budget

Other proposals

7. The £250,000 proposed to be spent over 5 years on the Visitor Strategy does not impact on the budget. It is proposed that this should be spent over 3 years rather than 5 in order to impact on increasing visitor numbers and income to the Borough more quickly.
8. The proposal to spend £500,000 over 5 years on updating play equipment is a capital item. The capital is available now so it is proposed that this should be spent over 3 years to carry out the improvements more quickly.
9. The project to restore a bridge over the leats at Oare Gunpowder Works will mainly use s106 money. The cost of the project, having been delayed for so long has increased. It is proposed to allot £10,000 of capital to allow this project to be completed in 2018/19
10. £2,000,000 of capital has been included to improve the Sittingbourne and Sheppey leisure centres. With these leisure centres costing SBC a minimum of £600,000 pa that means an expenditure of £5,000,000 over 5 years. It is proposed that a further £1,000,000 is put into the capital budget to provide for renovation of Faversham Swimming Pools which have been supported over the last 5 years by a total £550,000 before taking account of the estimated extra parking fees to SBC of £90,000 pa.
11. It is finally proposed that a clear commitment is given as to how much further and future increase will be allowed in reserves. Total reserves are expected to be £17,208,000 at the end of 2017/18 which is considered too high.

Proposed Cllr. Mike Henderson Seconded Cllr. Monique Bonney