# POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 

## 14 ${ }^{\text {th }}$ DECEMBBER 2020

## DRAFT BUDGET REPORT

All the spending Committees have received and considered budgets for 2021/22 but of course the Covid pandemic during 2020 has fundamentally impacted on the budget and overall finances of the Council, which has created a different framework for this year.

The ambition of the Officers has been to keep the precept the same as for 2020/21 in full recognition of the impact that the pandemic has had on household budgets and to reflect the fact that there will in any event be a $2 \%$ increase outside of our control imposed by South Hams DC, by the reduction of our Council tax base and the collection rate anticipated by South Hams DC. (Updated increase calculations
shown in addendum - attached.)

## 2020/21 Budget

Within the paperwork Members will note that the projected figures for this year show a shortfall of $£ 54031$ and I would wish to place on record that this will be an exceptional performance if anything close to this is achieved. This is a great tribute to all the staff of this Council both the Town Hall and the Watermark for the part they have played, sometimes in the face of quite challenging actions by some Councillors which in many Councils would have caused a major demotivating impact, particularly allied with two staff undergoing chemotherapy treatment for cancer. I had never experienced a situation like this before in my 35 years in local government and it is very regrettable that we had to retain the services of our solicitor (which had been mentioned at previous Policy and Resources meetings in terms of the costs) to restore the legal functioning of this Council.

The breadth of professionalism and determination exhibited over this last nine months has been extraordinary - including the Business Manager achieving the furloughing of Watermark staff and pursuing any grants available for our sector; the Senior Finance Officer ensuring that all expenditure is only on a needs must basis and closely monitoring the cashflow; the Watermark staff taking no pay award for the period from $1^{\text {st }}$ April to end August; the Assistant Town Clerk plugging gaps and taking on an array of extra tasks with the absence of both myself and the Admin Officer due to cancer treatments or all the other team members including the Finance Officer, Parks Rangers and Admin Officer who have adapted to the massively changed basis on which we had to operate this year, showing tremendous flexibility and commitment to this town.

At the outset we had anticipated that there could be over $£ 100,000$ shortfall and of course we cannot be certain how the remainder of this financial year will progress but because our reserves were reasonably sound it does mean that we should still have three months operational costs in general reserves, which is considered a
minimum to have in hand. This is quite an incredible position after all the uncertainty of the early stages of the pandemic and has been made possible by the intervention and encouragement of many of our experienced Councillors who have been there to assist and support the staff.

## Budget 2021/22

Last year South Hams DC paid its last year of Council tax support at $£ 8125$ and $£ 7000$ of that was allocated to climate change with $£ 5000$ being earmarked towards the salary of the Business Manager to lead on that aspect. The salaries allocation of $£ 5000$ has now been deleted but the events/initiatives money has been left in. In his role as Town Clerk that will become part of his responsibility as the next Manager at the Watermark is intended not to be a Business Manager, so the role will be focussed on The Watermark.

Salaries reflect a $2 \%$ increase, which was included following advice from South Hams DC as to their expectations, but in the light of recent information where public sector pay is likely to be frozen it could well be that this amount offers a saving which could assist other areas of the budget and leave some flexibility. The salaries budget was considered in more detail by the Personnel Committee and any discussion about staffing and salaries should be held in that forum, which is very properly held in confidential session. If any Committee Chairmen wish to explore changes to any of the job roles impacting on the work of their committee then this should be done via the Personnel Committee.

In the Community Development budget Christmas festivities have returned to the $£ 8000$ sum allocated for this year, but the intention had been to have a community conversation about the event prior to committing to plans. Members are invited to consider reviving that plan for early 2021 as a commitment will need to be made early in the next financial year about the lighting company to appoint for the 2021 display, as well as booking any entertainers that might be required.

The Youth centre project funding has been retained at $£ 8000$ because this was originally to cover work done with Young Devon to support counselling, but Government funding via schools may now mean this support is more properly in place and the Town Council money can be used to develop the Youth Venue in conjunction with Ivybridge Youth for Christ, the Salvation Army and VOYC, who are working in partnership for Ivybridge to receive support from Devon Space for youth worker involvement in the town. Cllr Ray Wilson is leading on this work and Cllr Croad has been contacted for his support.

Grants are retained as is the contribution towards the community connector, although there is still some funding in earmarked reserves to meet our commitments. If the role is to continue then the financial support from Devon Social Services will be essential and those discussions have not yet commenced to my knowledge. South Hams Voluntary Service provides the management for the community connector.

The Town Hall committee room should be returned to the Town Council early in 2021 when the Ivybridge Brewing Company moves out and a decision about its
future use will be needed. Whilst the Brewing company were utilising the space (without charge) they were able to claim business rate relief on the space so the Town Council was not liable. If it is vacated then it is possible that there is a two year business rate holiday for the space if it remains vacant, but if it comes into Town Council use then business rates will be payable so it does suggest it needs to generate some income, which perhaps does not preclude the council reinstating its use as a Council Chamber rather than using the Library once the remote meeting option comes to an end, as money is set aside in the budget for room hire.
$£ 10,000$ was allocated in the current year to upgrade the toilets with the intention of repeating this sum in 2021 but $£ 5000$ has been earmarked and it might be that the work needs to be commenced towards the end of the financial year so that a further allocation can be made in 2022. There may be other works which are considered appropriate to the Committee Room area which could be a higher priority than upgrading the toilets.

Butterpark development should commence in 2021 with the agreement with LiveWest finally moving towards agreement and the planning application would then be submitted. Whilst it is very unlikely that a PWLB loan would need to be drawn down next year it does mean that there is a cushion for any additional professional support needed as the project progresses beyond that included in the budget. Once the planning application is approved, and possibly before then, the Valuation Office can redesignate the site so that Business rates will no longer be payable. Several attempts have been made to encourage South Hams DC to use its discretionary powers to cancel the rates, the last one was by CIIr Dredge and myself in discussion with the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer, but to date to no avail. Also at the time of planning being granted the agreement with LiveWest would see the site transferred to them thereby taking responsibility for insurance and rates, with necessary legal protections in place as part of the contract.

Much work to the Parks in the coming year will be supported by section 106 expenditure eg upgrading the access road to Filham Park, the masterplan exercise and delivery of the outcomes which will potentially include a pumptrack, extension of the allotments and other community initiatives, plus the work at Erme Valley Playing Fields to name but a few. The Cemetery extension work is being overseen by ParkLife CIC on behalf of South Hams DC. Longtimber Woods will continue to be managed in accordance with the Forestry Commission approved plan with Rupert Lane acting as advisor. The works there can be funded from the reserve which was put in place during the time of the Dartmoor NPA so the revenue budget may look tight but there is a sufficient buffer in place and some of the work can be covered by the sale of timber.

The Watermark budget has been included this time and whilst the committee are still anticipating a $£ 74000$ shortfall, the savings on the Town Council budget have reduced the overall impact. For next year a shortfall of $£ 9400$ is shown and the progress with the Covid vaccination and return to some normality by April will make that more feasible. Cllr Dredge may be able to comment further on this and he has been closely-involved in the work-to enable The Watermark to respond quickly to changing circumstances over the last year by working closely with Officers.

## Future options for addressing a shortfall

Earlier this year efforts to take a loan payment holiday were pursued, including via the MP, but the only offer ultimately by PWLB was that if you couldn't afford to make loan repayments then a holiday would be permitted. As this Council was not in that position then it wasn't pursued. Last month the opportunity to raise this point again arose with DALC, NALC and also to South Hams DC plus our MP, Sir Gary Streeter. The information received from DALC, which has been supported by our MP by writing to MHCLG, was as follows:
> "The message we got yesterday is that you do not have to wait until you cannot afford to make your PWLB repayments. You can apply before reaching that stage. There is a holistic approach being taken, and it will be for you to make the case why you need/want a payment holiday. MHCLG views yesterday (sic $18^{\text {th }}$ November) is that the system is there to help - there will be no red mark against your town council, it won't affect your ability to borrow in future."

This is an important development and whilst I would not recommend the need to apply at this stage, it could be before the end of this financial year if the shortfall looks to be nearer $£ 75,000$ in total then a one year payment holiday of the Watermark loans would result in a $£ 49,700$ saving. It is a cost effective way of relieving a burden without recourse to more borrowing, which seems to be the only other route being offered, rather than any grants, which in view of the forthcoming Butterpark project would not be helpful to take out a further loan at this stage, nor is it considered necessary. It is a useful backstop which hopefully won't be needed.

## Summary

The Council tax requirement in the draft budget is recommended to be unchanged at $£ 502,412$ which is a zero increase, but showing a shortfall of $£ 3128$ which would need to be met from reserves. The alternative is to increase the Council tax by $£ 1$ per household to cover the shortfall but this would then be added to another increase which is going to arise as referred to in the opening section of this report.

As a guide our band $D$ for the current year is 3857.87 and $£ 130.23$ per household per annum; this proposal would result no change per Band $D$ equivalent but we await the details of the Council tax base which will be provided to us by South Hams District Council and the anticipated reduction (see email from $10^{\text {th }}$ November 2020)

As Jonathan Parsons will be taking over as Town Clerk later in December he has been engaged in the development of this budget, attending the committee meetings when it was under discussion.

As this is the final budget I will present I want to thank all the Officer team who helped to achieve this outcome and to the Councillors, particularly CIIr Dredge, who has been actively engaged in guiding the finances of this Council over many years and has enabled us to be in a strong position moving forward into 2021 despite the
pandemic. My thanks also to all the Chairmen and Mayors, past and present, with whom it has been my pleasure to work with over almost 20 years.

Members are invited to consider the budget for 2021/22 and to recommend the level of precept to full Council in January.

Mrs Lesley Hughes
Town Clerk

From: Angela Endean [Angela.Endean@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Angela.Endean@swdevon.gov.uk)
Sent: 10 November 2020 15:42
To: SH-All Parish Clerks [SH-AllParishClerks@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:SH-AllParishClerks@southhams.gov.uk)
Cc: SH-All Members [SH-AllMembers@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:SH-AllMembers@southhams.gov.uk); cara@devonalc.org.uk; Lisa Buckle [Lisa.Buckle@swdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Lisa.Buckle@swdevon.gov.uk)
Subject: Council Tax Base for 2021/22
Dear Town and Parish Clerks,

Due to the uncertainty brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, we write to advise you of a potential implication for your tax base for 2021/22. Although the council tax data will not be available to us until after $30^{\text {th }}$ November (the statutory date), early indications are that your Town or Parish tax base could reduce by up to $2 \%$ for 2021/22 and we wanted to give Town and Parish Clerks time to build this assumption into your 2021/22 precept calculations for your 2021/22 Budget preparations.

This $2 \%$ reduction in the 2021/22 Tax Base is attributable to two main factors:
Firstly, there is an increase in the number of council tax reduction awards for residents, which is in response to hardship during the pandemic. Secondly, there will be an anticipated reduction in the council tax collection rate percentage.

Normally South Hams District Council budgets for a 98\% collection rate for council tax in the District and this will be reduced by $1 \%$, to an anticipated $97 \%$ collection rate for council tax for 2021/22.

We will write to advise you of your actual tax base in mid-December as usual but we wanted to give Town and Parish Clerks an early heads up of a potential decrease in the tax base of around $2 \%$ for 2021/22.

## Council Tax Support Grant allocations

I also wish to remind you that 2020/21 was the final year of Council Tax Support Grant allocations to Town and Parish Councils. This followed a reduction of 50\% per annum in 2020/21 and 2021/22 as approved by South Hams Councillors in November 2019. Therefore please budget for a Nil allocation of the Council Tax Support Grant for 2021/22.

If you have any queries regarding these matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,
Angela
Angela Endean| Specialist - Accountant
South Hams District Council | West Devon Borough Council
Email: angela.endean@swdevon.gov.uk
Tel: 01803861480
Work days | Monday - Thursday



| $\begin{aligned} & 08 / 12 / 2020 \\ & 11: 09 \end{aligned}$ |  | Ivybridge Town Council <br> Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 8) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Page 3 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Last Year |  | Current Year |  |  |  | Next Year |  |  |  |
|  |  | Budget | Actual | Total | Actual YTD | Projected | Committed | Agreed | EMR |  |  |
| 4818 | Community Award | 100 | 100 | 150 | 100 | 150 | 0 | 150 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4820 | Fireworks | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4825 | Festival/Community V J Day | 500 | 0 | 800 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 500 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4830 | Dove Project | 400 | 0 | 400 | 0 | 400 | 0 | 400 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4840 | Chapel Place Grant | 1,000 | 0 | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | ,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4850 | RBL Remembrance Service | 700 | 670 | 700 | 98 | 200 | 0 | 700 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4852 | Ivybridge Caring | 900 | 900 | 900 | 900 | 900 | 0 | 00 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4853 | Health Project | 5,000 | 54 | 3,000 | 0 | 3,000 | 0 | 900 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  |  | 5,000 | 54 | 3,000 | 0 | 3,000 | 0 | 2,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Overhead Expenditure | 64,819 | 52,449 | 62,605 | 37,629 | 68,655 | 0 | 60,065 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve | $(64,419)$ | $(48,634)$ | $(62,005)$ | $(21,127)$ | $(62,955)$ |  | $(59,665)$ |  |  |  |
| 103 Civic and Democratric |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4400 | Salaries/Wages | 15,886 | 15,572 | 16,524 | 10,354 | 16,524 | 0 | 16,277 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4500 | Mayors Allowance | 1,200 | 411 | 1,200 | 0 | 1,200 | 0 | 1,200 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4520 | Members Expenses | 1,500 | 1,548 | 1,500 | 898 | 1,500 | 0 | 1,500 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4530 | Hospitality and Civic Dinner | 500 | 326 | 1,000 | 89 | 200 | 0 | 500 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4532 | Room Hire | 1,500 | 1,000 | 1,500 | 0 | 350 | 0 | 1,500 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4535 | Civic Regalia | 500 | 634 | 500 | 60 | O | 0 | 1,500 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4540 | Election Costs | 1,000 | 1,000 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 | 500 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  |  |  | 1,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Overhead Expenditure | 22,086 | 20,491 | 22,224 | 11,402 | 19,774 | 0 | 21,477 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve | $(22,086)$ | $(20,491)$ | $(22,224)$ | $(11,402)$ | $(19,774)$ |  | $(21,477)$ |  |  |  |
| 104 | Watermark Central Costs |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4205 | General Maintenance | 0 | 5,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |












| $\begin{aligned} & 08 / 12 / 2020 \\ & 11: 09 \end{aligned}$ |  | Ivybridge Town Council <br> Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 8) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Page 14 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 3000 | Cost of Sales | Last Year |  | Current Year |  |  |  | Next Year |  |  |  |
|  |  | Budget | Actual | Total | Actual YTD | Projected | Committed | Agreed | EMR |  |  |
|  |  | 400 | 38 | 400 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Direct Expenditure | 400 | 38 | 400 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4030 | Advertising | 300 | 80 | 300 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 450 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4180 | Repairs and Renewals | 200 | 378 | 200 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4200 | Equipment | 500 | 92 | 500 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4205 | General Maintenance | 250 | 9 | 250 | 0 | 350 | 0 | 350 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4215 | Consumables | 100 | 9 | 100 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4400 | Salaries/Wages | 7,100 | 3,726 | 6,000 | 3,601 | 3,500 | 0 | 3,411 | - | 0 |  |
| 4730 | Performing Rights | 0 | -425 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,41 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Overhead Expenditure | 8,450 | 3,869 | 7,350 | 3,601 | 4,050 | 0 | 4,661 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve | 27,200 | 24,409 | 21,500 | 2,001 | $\overline{3,650}$ |  | 30,839 |  |  |  |
| 707 | Cinema |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1015 | Income Cinema | 46,000 | 58,401 | 56,000 | 657 | 1,046 | 0 | 57.500 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 1700 | Income Grants | 0 | 2,120 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | - 0 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 1860 | Income Booking Fee | 2,500 | 2,903 | 2,500 | -101 | 0 | 0 | 3,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 1899 | Income Miscellaneous | 500 | 1,086 | 500 | 272 | 0 | 0 | 3,000 500 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Total Income | 49,000 | 64,510 | 59,000 | 829 | 1,046 | 0 | 61,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 3000 | Cost of Sales | 19,500 | 31,101 | 28,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Direct Expenditure | 19,500 | 31,101 | 28,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4030 | Advertising | 2,000 | 1,661 | 2,200 | 388 | 400 | 0 | 2,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4040 | Telephone/Fax | 600 | 573 | 600 | 334 | 600 | 0 | 2,000 600 | 0 | 0 |  |




Continued on next page


Continued on next page

| $\begin{aligned} & 08 / 12 / 2020 \\ & 11: 09 \end{aligned}$ |  | Ivybridge Town Council <br> Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 8) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Page 20 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | Last Year |  | Current Year |  |  |  | Next Year |  |  |  |
|  |  | Budget | Actual | Total | Actual YTD | Projected | Committed | Agreed | EMR | Carried Forward |  |
| 4121 | Gas | 625 | 725 | 600 | 144 | 500 | 0 | 800 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4125 | Erme Court Service Charge | 3,000 | 3,281 | 3,000 | 1,571 | 3,000 | 0 | 3,300 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4130 | Insurance | 625 | 609 | 600 | 406 | 600 | 0 | 700 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4150 | Cleaners | 2,800 | 2,343 | 2,800 | 582 | 2,150 | 0 | 3,250 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4155 | Cleaning Materials | 350 | 412 | 500 | 108 | 900 | 0 | 500 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4157 | Trade Waste | 300 | 317 | 300 | 69 | 300 | 0 | 350 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4160 | Cleaning Hygiene | 100 | 63 | 100 | 63 | 100 | 0 | 100 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4176 | Alarms/Security | 350 | 205 | 500 | 259 | 500 | 0 | 250 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4178 | Safety Inspections | 200 | 58 | 200 | 0 | 150 | 0 | 200 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4180 | Repairs and Renewals | 0 | 0 | 0 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4200 | Equipment | 300 | 245 | 350 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 350 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4202 | Light Equipment | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4205 | General Maintenance | 3,500 | 3,027 | 3,000 | 1,73 | 3,0 | 0 | 3,000 | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4211 | Lift Maintenance | 250 | 228 | 300 | 60 |  | 0 |  | 0 | 0 |  |
| 4400 | Salaries/Wages | 1,200 | 1,148 | 1,300 | 783 | 1300 | 0 | 300 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  | Overhead Expenditure <br> Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve |  |  |  |  | 1,300 | 0 | 1,350 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  |  | 24,880 | 22,883 | 24,230 | 9,024 | 21,455 | 0 | 25,080 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  |  | 19,120 | 22,508 | 22,270 | 18,282 | 17,745 |  | 18,320 |  |  |  |
| The Watermark - Income |  | 392,250 | 383,420 | 402,400 | 86,968 | 131,846 | 0 | 384,100 | 0 | 0 |  |
| Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve |  | 396,711 | 394,384 | 409,480 | 126,696 | 205,845 | 0 | 393,543 | 0 | 0 |  |
|  |  | $(4,461)$ | $(10,964)$ | $(7,080)$ | $(39,728)$ | $(73,999)$ |  | $(9,443)$ |  |  |  |



