

Parish Report – January 2020

Councillor

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2020-21 Budget Proposals

Overview

- Forecast Budget Requirement = £545.4m
- Expected Funding = £550.8m
- The remaining funding will be divided into contributions to reserves (£1.8m), investment into Highways (£0.5m) and the “Suffolk 2020 Fund” (£3m)

Council Tax

Council Tax is due to increase by 4% in 2020-21 .1.9% of this will be for general council tax, whilst another 2% will be the final increase for the Social Care Precept.

Suffolk 2020 Fund

£3m of the Council’s funding was suddenly announced at the end of 2019. This will be available through the “Suffolk 2020 Fund”. The purpose of this fund is to enable investment in projects focused on carbon reduction/offset, road safety, natural environment, built environment, innovation and use of technology. The budget proposals suggest that all projects will need to have a Cabinet “sponsor” and be capable of delivery within 12 months. They must have a clear return on investment (economic, social and/or environmental) and involve non-recurring expenditure.

More details on how this funding will be allocated, and who can bid for funding, is not yet known.

Citizens Advice

In last year’s budget, Suffolk County Council announced that it would be removing the £368,000 grant for Citizens Advice. However, the budget proposals for 2020-21 include £120,000 funding for Citizens Advice. This grant will remain in place for three years only and will be subject to annual review of the service in terms of efficiency, income generation and impact.

After three years of additional funding, the council expects Citizens Advice to become financially independent. I have asked why the grant could not be increased.

Savings

There are no major cuts to services proposed in the 2020-21 budget. However, the budget does rely on the council achieving £7.2m of savings and a further £12.3m

Future bus projects

At a Scrutiny meeting in December, the deputy cabinet member for transport announced that the council was planning to bid for around £20 million from the Department for Transport for an electric bus pilot scheme. If the bid is successful, the council has said that it plans to launch the pilot scheme within 12-18 months in the Bury St Edmunds area.

MID SUFFOLK

APPLICATION LAND ADJACENT TO HALL ORCHARD MILL ROAD; I have put in a form to refer the application to committee if the planning officer is minded to refuse.

APPLICATION IN EDMUNDS ROAD. I will speak with the planning officer to see what their views are . I am concerned at the impact on the road in Edmunds road and on the neighbouring properties.

BUDGET; midsuffolk are looking at an increase in council tax by 1.66%. Council house rents by 2.7% and a £2 rise in utility charges for sheltered housing tenants