

Cabinet

24 February 2016



Title	Detailed Revenue Budget for 2016/17		
Purpose of the report	To make a recommendation to Council on a Key Decision		
Report Author	Adrian Flynn		
Cabinet Member	Councillor Tim Evans	Confidential	No
Corporate Priority	This item is not in the current list of Corporate priorities but still requires a Cabinet decision		
Cabinet Values	Accountability		
Recommendations	<p>The cabinet is asked to recommend that Council consider and approves :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The growth and savings items as set out in the report's appendices.2. The Council tax Base for the whole council area for 2016-17.[Item T in the formula in Section 31b(3) of the local government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "act")] should be 38,308.40 band D equivalent dwellings and, 2.1 Calculate that the Council tax requirement for the Council's own purpose for 2016-2017 is £187.44 Per Band D equivalent dwelling.3. To approve a 2.7% increase in the Spelthorne Borough Council element of the Council tax for 2016-17. Moreover:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a) The revenue estimates as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.b) No Money, as set out in this report is appropriated from General Reserves in support of Spelthorne's local Council tax for 2016/17.c) To agree that the council tax base for the year 2016/17 is 38,308.40 band D equivalent dwellings calculated in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council tax base) Regulations 1992, as amended, made under Section 35(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.		

That the following sums be now calculated by the Council for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Section 31 to 36 of the Local Government Act 1992.

A	71,233,115	Being the aggregate of the amount which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
B	64,052,589	Being the aggregate of the amount which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act
C	7,180,526	Being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (2 above) calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of it's Council tax for the year (including Parish precepts)
D	187.44	Being the amount at 3(c) above (item R), all divided by item T(2 above) calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for

		the year(including Parish precepts)
E	0	Being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
F	187.44	Being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3 (e) above by Item T(2 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings on those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

All newly built commercial property completed between 1st October 2013 and 30 Sept 2016 will be exempted from empty property rates for the first 18 months, up to the state aid limit.

A 50 per cent business rates relief for 18 months between 1st April 2014 and 31st March 2017 for businesses that move into retail premises(excluding banks, building societies and betting shops) that have been empty for a year or more.

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
124.96	145.79	166.61	187.44	229.09	270.75	312.40	374.88

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) above by the number which in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in

a particular valuation band divided by the sum which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band 'D', calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different band.

That it be noted that for the year 2016/17 Surrey County Council and Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to Spelthorne Borough Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Precepts issued to the Council

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1) Surrey County Council	845.52	986.44	1127.36	1268.28	1550.12	1831.96	2113.80	2536.56
2) Surrey Police	146.79	171.26	195.72	220.19	269.12	318.05	366.98	440.38

That, having calculated the aggregate in each case above the Council in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, hereby sets the amounts set out in Appendix 6 as the amounts of Council tax for the year 2016/17 for each of the categories of dwellings on Appendix 3.

The Council has determined that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2016/17 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

As the billing authority, the council has not been notified by a major precepting authority that its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2016/17 is excessive and that the billing authority is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK Local Government Finance Act 1992.

1. Key issues

- 1.1 Appendix 1 summarises the current draft detailed Budget proposed for 2016-17. After allowing for Housing Benefit the gross budget is financed as follows,
- Fees and Charges
 - Revenue Support Grant & Business Rates
 - Council Tax

Grant Settlement

- 1.2 The Government grant settlement confirmed that Spelthorne would provisionally receive an underlying cut of £651k (49%) in its general grant support for 2016/17.

Council Tax and Capping

- 1.3 In the December 2015 provisional grant settlement for local authorities the Government confirmed that it will not be offering any council tax freeze grant for 2016/17 and indeed its calculations are based on the assumption that all councils will set the maximum increased allowed under the rules.
- 1.4 It has been confirmed that the referendum limit will remain either at 2% or a maximum rise of £5 for shire districts and boroughs although counties and unitaries will be able to levy an additional 2% for adult social care and the police can increase by 4%. Therefore the Council will continue its current strategy of protecting services by growing its income stream and setting a moderate council tax increase of (£5) which provides an additional £191k per annum.

Basis of preparation of Detailed Budget

- 1.5 Service levels – the estimates have been prepared on the basis of maintaining existing service levels except where variations have been approved by the Cabinet and or the Council. Members should be aware that considerable work has been undertaken to reduce the list down to just the absolute essentials. Appendices 2 and 3 contain a list of the major changes included.
- 1.6 Pay and price levels – the estimates have been prepared at pay and price levels ruling at December 2015 including an average increase of 2.4% over 2 years for salaries and wages from 1st April 2016. The Council awards the national local government employers agreement.

Inflation has been included in respect of contracts where appropriate

Pensions

- 1.7 Following the triennial valuation of the Surrey Local Government Pension Fund as at the 31st March 2013, it is necessary for employers to increase their lump sum contributions to cover an increase in the deficit relating to benefits earned by scheme members as a result of service up to 31st March 2013 known as past service deficit contributions. For 2016/17 these contributions will rise by £180k but anticipated to reduce to approx £50k per year from 2017/18.
- 1.8 In 2016/17 there will be an additional impact on employers 'national insurance contributions as a result of the end of the contracted- out arrangements. This would add a further approximate £127k to our employer costs for 2016/17 onwards.

Fees and charges

- 1.9 All fees and charges have been reviewed. See separate report on the agenda.

Income Generation

- 1.10 The budget forecasts have reflected the performance of the Council's income over the last two years during which time income levels have held up despite the general economic pressures. As part of the 2015/16 budget monitoring officers have been keeping the Council's various income streams under continuous review, particularly car parking our largest fee earning area, and this has impacted on the level of in year saving's required to balance the 2016/17 budget. Income has generally held up well, with Building Control,

Green waste bin and trade waste income doing particularly well and additional income has been included in the detailed estimates where it was seen to be achievable and potentially ongoing. It is estimated that the net additional income to be raised from fees and charges for 2016/17 is £207k.

Contingencies

- 1.11 No provision has been made for any general contingencies. The General fund reserve exists as a source of contingency funds should a need arise which can be addressed through offsetting savings.

Interest Rates

- 1.12 The Council at present has benefited from several years of above average investment returns through a diversified range of pooled investment funds. The return on these funds ranges from 3 to 6.72% as at the 31st December 2015.
- 1.13 Returns on maturing cash deposits are currently within the range of 0.50 to 0.80% and the average overall return on investments is expected to be around 2.25%

Investment Income

- 1.14 The Cabinet has separately received on the January meeting agenda the Annual Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Report for 2016/17 indicating the current position in respect of interest rates and the proposed strategy for dealing with the lower levels of interest rates and the reduction of investment monies.
- 1.15 Leading market forecasters, including Arlingclose, the Council's treasury advisors, expect the base rate to remain at 0.5% until at least the 4th quarter of calendar year 2016.

Use of Reserves

- 1.16 The change in the financial landscape with an extended period of public sector austerity with district councils on the receiving end of the steepest growth cuts, the extended period of low interest rates and the need to facilitate invest to save as part of towards a sustainable future and the redevelopment of Knowle green means that it will be unrealistic to eliminate the use of reserves in 2016/17.

It is proposed to use approximately £786k worth of general reserves to fund upfront resources required to ensure the successful delivery of *Towards a Sustainable Future* savings in future years. This would be funded from the New Schemes Fund reserve and would include funding a new document management system to reduce and eliminate the physical storage of documents and the setting up of a housing delivery company to help tackle some of the Borough's homelessness issues as well as delivering an income to the Council. A feasibility study into the redevelopment of Spelthorne Leisure centre will also be undertaken.

Growth Items

- 1.17 Appendix 2 summarises the main budget growth and unavoidable expenditure pressures. This highlights that additional spending pressures or reduced income streams totalling £913k have been identified. Of this £486k is required for invest to save initiatives and is therefore being funded from reserves, as set out in appendix 2.
- 1.18 The evaluation of growth bids received from services have been evaluated using a number of criteria including
- Whether there is an invest to generate future income aspect
 - Whether there is an invest to achieve future savings
 - Whether it is necessary to meet statutory obligations
 - Whether it is necessary for operational reasons
 - The extent to which it supports corporate priorities
- 1.19 It can be seen that with respect to the last of the above criteria a significant proportion of the growth bids relate to corporate priorities :
- Knowle Green redevelopment relating to new ways of working and saving of physical storage of documents.
 - Temporary Accommodation and Housing options resourcing relating to Planning and Housing priority.
 - Feasibility study regarding the redevelopment of Spelthorne Leisure Centre.
 - Setting up a Housing Delivery Company.

Savings

- 1.20 In total savings of approximately £1.7m have been found as part of the Council's Towards a Sustainable Future programme (TaSF) that was launched in the summer of 2014. The savings include one off election costs, increased Interest earnings from our investments, increased recovery of housing overpayment credits. These savings are necessary to offset the reduced general government grant and the additional pressures identified in appendix 2. All savings proposals have been incorporated into the budget estimates and a summary of the major items proposed are listed in appendix 3.
- 1.21 The salary savings target for 2016/17 will remain the same at £300k.

Precepts

Surrey County Council at its meeting on the 9th February set a Band D council tax of £1268.28 Representing a 3.99% increase and Surrey Police at its tax setting meeting on the 4th February set a band D council tax of £220.19 representing a 1.99% increase.

2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The Council is required to set a balanced budget and in the light of the detailed budget prepared, a council tax increase of £5 which is equivalent to 2.7% is recommended.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 Addressed in the body of the report.

4. Other considerations

- 4.1 Robustness of estimates the Local Government Act 2003 requires me, as the Council's Chief Financial Officer, to report on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of calculating the council tax. I am satisfied that each service budget has been prepared in the context of the council's corporate strategies, and longer term financial strategy which means that the Council is presented with robust estimates as a basis for making decisions about the level of council tax.
- 4.2 The nature and size of our revenue budget carries a degree of risk, this is particularly the case in the current economic climate.
- 4.3 Reserves and provisions – the local Government Act 2003 requires me to report on the adequacy of the council's financial reserves when consideration is given to the general fund budget requirement for the year. Under the local government finance act 1988, all revenue balances held by the council are at the direct disposal of the general fund with the exception of the collection fund and the investment reserve. Those balances are expected to total approximately £14m as at the 1st April 2016. However a number of these balances are earmarked specifically for social housing and the new scheme fund. The uncommitted funds stand at £800k. Taken together with the council's financial strategy to reduce the reliance on revenues to support the council tax, I consider that the reserves and provisions will ensure that the council maintains a reasonably healthy financial position.
- 4.4 Officers are undertaking an equalities impact assessment of the budget proposals. In particular a detailed equalities impact assessment was undertaken for the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 4.5 The budget has a number of risks and these are set out below :

Outside control	Internally based
Interest rates	Failure to sufficiently resource delivery of key asset income generation projects
Severe public sector spending cuts	Collection of retained business rates
Recycling Credits – falling values of recyclable materials	Reliance on interest earnings to balance the budget.
Staines town centre rents	Ability to deliver Towards a Sustainable Future objectives in accordance with planned timetable
Down turn in property development market	
Increased Gate fees for disposing of	

waste materials	
Housing benefit subsidy/welfare reform.	

The risks are that the level of savings anticipated do not materialise or that there are additional spending pressures. These will be mitigated by ensuring proposals have been properly evaluated before being built into the final budget for example clarifying any contractual assumptions, and thereafter through careful budget monitoring.

5. Timetable for implementation

5.1 Full Council to approve the Budget on 25 February 2016

Background papers: None

Appendices: 1, 2 & 3