

REPORT TO:	Council
REPORT NO:	HF/19/18
DATE:	21 February 2018
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Mark Pritchard (Organisation – Finance, Performance, Health & Safety and Governance)
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark Owen (Tel: 292704)
SUBJECT:	Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting 2018/19
WARD:	N/A

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To enable members to agree the 2018/19 revenue budget in accordance with the recommendations of the Executive Board and to set the council tax for the financial year beginning 1 April 2018.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 On 9 January 2018 members of the Executive Board agreed a net budget of £232,871,963 for recommendation to Council.
- 2.2 The attached report by the Head of Finance, which will form part of the budget book, refers to:
- the planning framework and the process followed in compiling the budget
 - the outworking of the budget monitoring and control exercise during the current financial year
 - the 2018/19 financial settlement from the Welsh Government
 - the proposed expenditure for 2018/19 and the position on balances
 - the resulting council tax proposals

Appendix 1 to the report contains a financial summary of the budget proposals.

- 2.3 The highlights of the proposed budget are:-

- it has a strong link to the Council Plan and it continues to prioritise the vulnerable
- includes increases for Schools, Adult and Children's Social Care Services
- it delivers efficiency savings and cuts of £4.787m
- it highlights the risks associated with the proposed budget and the need for close management of them during the year.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1**
- a) the budget totalling £ 232,871,963 be approved.**
 - b) that the Authority's council tax for 2018/19 for Band D is set at £1,090.80 in respect of its general expenses and in respect of the special expenses for footway lighting a charge of £4.93 on the town centre community areas of Acton, Caia Park, Offa and Rhosddu, £16.44 on the community of Llangollen Rural, £12.46 on the community of Glyntraian and £10.60 on the community of Chirk.**
 - c) that the Medium Term Financial Strategy including the Council's Reserve Strategy outlined in Appendix 4 be approved.**
 - d) that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy outlined in Appendix 5 be approved.**
- 3.2 That the recommended council tax resolution for 2018/19 contained in Annex 1 be approved**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable the Council to determine its revenue budget for 2018/19 and set the council tax for that year.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1** The Council's financial plan has been developed during the current financial year and considered by members through a series of all member budget workshops and scrutiny committee meetings. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is outlined in Appendix 4.
- 4.2** The Local Government final settlement was published on 20 December 2017 which indicated an increase in the Council's grant support of 0.34% compared to the Wales average increase of 0.2%. On 9 January 2018 the Executive Board agreed a net budget of £232,871,963 for recommendation to Council.

Treasury Management Strategy

- 4.3** In accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management the Council is required to approve the 2018/19 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy prior to the beginning of the financial year. The Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19 is outlined in Appendix 5.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy Framework** – The budget plan has been formulated with close regard to the Council Plan. In determining the savings needed to be made for 2018-19, officers and members considered a range of savings proposals and focused on making savings that minimise the negative impact on the most vulnerable.
- 5.2 Budget** – The Council’s net revenue budget for 2017/18 is £225,323,754 as agreed on 22 February 2017 (HF/12/17).
- 5.3 Legal** – There is a legal requirement to set the Council’s 2018-19 Budget and consequent council tax levels.
- 5.4 Staffing** – Any staffing implications are contained in the body of the report.
- 5.5 Equality/Human Rights** – An overall Equality Impact Assessment has been completed (FIN/EIA/00110/2017). Members of the public can request a copy of the full Equality Impact Assessment from the Contact Officer named in the header box of this report. A summary is attached as Appendix 6.
- 5.6 Risks** – The key risk areas in the budget and how these will be managed are outlined in the Head of Finance report attached (Appendix 2).

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 From 25 October to 30 November 2017 the package of draft budget proposals for the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years went out for public consultation. The proposals were summarised and presented in a booklet called ‘Difficult Decisions’. The survey and detailed information booklet was made available online on the Council’s website.
- 6.2 The consultation findings were presented to Members at an all Member Workshop on the 19 December 2017 and considered by members of the Executive Board on 9 January 2018 (HF/01/18).
- 6.3 There were a total number of 3,797 responses to the consultation including 3,620 responses to the survey, 30 participants at a Market Stall event and 143 letters/ e-mails. There were also 4 petitions including 2,512 signatures in respect of Country Parks (2), Music Service and introduction of car park charges.
- 6.4 The Schools’ Budget Forum, employee trade unions and non-domestic ratepayer representative bodies were consulted on the budget for 2018/19 following the Executive Board meeting on 24 October 2017. The Unions and individual Schools’ responses were included as Appendix 8 to the report considered by the Executive Board on 9 January 2018.
- 6.5 Following consideration of the results of the “Difficult Decisions” consultation, the Executive Board amended savings proposals in respect of Adult Social Care Bonus Payments, the Planning Conservation Service, reducing PCSO saving and a £50k budget was recommended from April 2019 to mitigate the impact of the Music Service changes. In addition, School funding is recommended to be increased by 1.48% rather than keeping the budget the same as 2017/18.

7. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

7.1 Scrutiny Committees have had the opportunity to review budget proposals throughout the process.

BACKGROUND PAPERS	LOCATION	WEBSITE INFO.
Wrexham County Borough Council Budget 2017/18	Head of Finance	http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/top_navigation/search/index.htm?q=2017%2F18%20Budget
Provisional & Final Local Government Revenue and Capital Settlements 2018/19		http://gov.wales/topics/localgovernment/finandfunding/settlement/lg-settlement-2018-19/?lang=en