

# **Tabled Paper**

**Council - 3 March 2022**

**Re - Budget 2022/23**

## **Responses to the 2022/23 Budget Consultation with Stakeholders.**

The 2022/2023 budget was published for consultation between 21 December 2021 to 18 February 2022 using the Councils' social media channels and website, this is an additional response to the tabled paper that was presented to Cabinet on the 24 February 2022.

## **Responses to 2022/23 Budget Consultation Exercise**

### **Response 5**

#### **Questions – As recorded on separate PDF document**

Thank you for taking time to read the budget consultation document and for your comments, where possible and where comments related to the 2022/2023 budget these have been answered. Where questions are broader in nature or relate to ongoing discussion then queries should be directed to / continued with the appropriate department within the Council.

#### **Response to Maintenance and Replacement section**

##### *Bullet point 1*

As you are aware there is an intention to replace the Park Farm Moat play equipment and this will be undertaken 2022/23, in the capital plan within the final budget report £1.1m has been identified overall for Play Park improvements across the borough, including Park Farm Moat.

##### *Bullet Point 2 & 3*

The Council is aware of both these issues which have been considered by the Council's Management Team.

From a budget perspective the de-silting of the Moat would not be an annual operational budget and therefore would need to be considered as a one off project and specific funding allocated, most likely coming from reserves. As you can appreciate the Council has a considerable number of projects for consideration and therefore the social, economic and financial benefits need to be fully considered as part of any bid, with funding allocated based on the merits of each bid and its affordability within the aspirations of the wider corporate plan.

We are still in communication with the Stanhope Angling Society on this issue, as well as yourselves, to find an alternative solution or alternative sources of funding,

which could include funds generated by the Angling Society from the sale of day tickets and membership subscriptions. We remain hopeful that this approach will ultimately be successful.

In relation to ditches and waterways, the Council has an active programme to manage such assets on a priority basis. However, it is acknowledged that more work needs to be undertaken to determine the remaining liabilities across the borough, with a programme of initial clearance works required being developed, which will then need to be costed and a budget request submitted for consideration. It would be helpful if you could continue to liaise with the Councils Nature Conservation Officer (Terry Jones) regarding the specific areas you have referenced.

We can then ensure that these are submitted for consideration in the coming months as part of the potential next programme of works.

#### *Bullet Point 4*

The Council does not have a rolling replacement programme and at present and will only replace damaged, unreadable street nameplates where identified.

To support the Council and Longevity of signs, the Council has worked with another Parish Council where parish volunteers who litter pick are also cleaning down signs, this has led to a visual improvement in quality of signage and instilled a sense of community pride amongst the volunteers, they also helped identify signs that were at the end of their economic lives and are now being scheduled for replacement.

#### *Closing Paragraphs*

In terms of corporate assets, the Council has allocated £1.1m in 2022/23 towards the repair and renewal of assets, there is also an additional operational budget of £300,000 for responsive and smaller works.

As you can appreciate the Council has a considerable asset base that requires monitoring and maintaining accordingly and is undertaken on a risk assessed basis.

#### **Stodmarsh and ABC' Budget**

Thank you for your comments and highlighting the intention of the Parish Council on any matters relating to wetland schemes. However, as with any asset coming into the Council's ownership, full lifecycle costs will be considered as part of the acquisition and appropriate maintenance schedules considered.