

Silverstone Parish Council - Meeting Report Proforma

Document Overview

Subject	Update from WNC Ward Councillor
Date	4 March 2025
Councillor or Clerk Proposing	Cllr Dermot Bambridge – Ward Councillor
Meeting Date	10 March 2025
Agenda Reference	Item 6
Purpose	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> To Note <input type="checkbox"/> To Discuss <input type="checkbox"/> To Resolve

Budget

On 20th February, West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) members, at the annual budget council meeting, set the budget for 2025 – 2026. The new budget is balanced and will continue to protect essential services and tackle significant challenges for the year ahead. The total budget for the coming year is £959.6 million, which is £431.8 million excluding the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Let's look back at last year first: the budget excluding the Dedicated Schools Grant was £383,517,000 and the outcome was an underspend of £220,000, which is 0.06% of the budget. We are very pleased with this having faced so many uncertainties, in particular regarding adult and child social care – an uncertainty that continues.

The key headlines for the 2025 – 2026 budget are as follows –

- Council Tax increase at 4.99% (2.99% general increase in line with the government's threshold and 2% adult social care increase)
- Average band D Council Tax £1,866.98
- £35.90 per week for provision of all services
- Increase for the year £88.73
- Increase per week £1.71 per week
- No service reductions
- No use of general fund balances to balance the budget
- £44.2m of growth in services to correct base budget pressures being encountered this year and allow for inflationary, volume and other increases for next year
- £24.6m of further efficiencies being driven out of the base budget bringing the total of savings over the last five years to £115m

In the £44.2m growth in services mentioned above, I just want to pick out the main areas this covers and those are pay awards and increments, contract inflation, adult Social Care – structural deficit and demographic growth, children's trust, home to school transport growth and temporary accommodation growth.

The £24.6m further efficiencies include amongst others, increased charges and income, buying and commissioning services, policy and process savings and redesigning and restructuring services.

Currently our reserves stand at £82m, which includes £36M general fund balances, which is well above the £21.5 recommended minimum level, £14m risk reserve, £20m other earmarked reserves and £12 ringfenced reserves.

In addition to the general fund expenditure the Council will also spend the following:

Public Health Grant of £21.6m, a dedicated Schools Grant of £527.7m a general Fund Capital Programme of £181m, including new schemes totalling and £33.4m and pipeline schemes (tbc) £23.9m a Housing Revenue Account of £67.4m and Housing Revenue Account Capital of £261.2m (for social housing).

The Council Tax bill also has a charge for Police and Fire (a total increase of 4.98%) which for a Band D property is £320.04 for the Police and £80.39 for the Fire service.

Town and Parish Council have no limit on how much they can increase Council Tax by so there is quite a spread of charges across the area. For Band D properties, the three highest Town/Parish Councils are: Nether Heyford (£233.95), West Haddon (£233.00) and Moulton (£232.74).

Silverstone is £61.13. That is from an annual total precept of £79,707 (the same as last year), which for a Band D property is £61.13pa, to this is added the police & fire part at £400.43 and WNC council tax £1,862.16 making a total of £2,323.72. To compare that, the current figure is £2,221.63. That is an increase of £102.9 or £8.50 per month.

One question I have been specifically asked is if there is any change to the charge for a green bin. This unfortunately is increasing from £58 - £60 per year.

The whole report from the council budget meeting on 20th February with a very comprehensive breakdown of all areas can be found by going to the WNC website, finding the full council meeting and clicking on the agenda reports pack.

West End Wildlife Project

The wildlife project that has been developed on land to the rear of 12 Hazlewood, does require planning consent. The owner of the land has done a pre-app to see if it is necessary and the planning department has told her a planning application must be submitted which she is in the process of doing.

DHL

As you may know, the appeal against the refusal of planning consent for the DHL site in Towcester concluded on Friday in Towcester. The Inspector's finding will be announced on or before the 23rd April. Our MP, Sarah Bool, has been actively opposing the DHL development in Towcester and has been working with Save Towcester Now and West Northants Council to have the appeal dismissed. She spoke previously on behalf of constituents at the Strategic Planning Meeting and again last week at the Public Inquiry held by the Inspector. Below is a link to the speech that Sarah gave to the Inquiry, which she hopes will be of interest to all residents and which firmly shows her support to local residents to oppose this application. [Sarah Bool DHL Appeal Submission](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMkyjJnXnmE) or you can Google <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMkyjJnXnmE>.

Kingsley Road

I am sorry for the disruption being caused by the resurfacing of Kingsley Road and resulting parking and access issues. It has taken me years of cajoling to get this done – to be honest I did not expect it to happen as soon as it has from the signals I was getting. However, I am a great believe in the adage that it's the squeaky wheel that gets the oil, I've done a lot of squeaking.

Footpath on Church Street

Despite several emails to Stuart Timmiss, WNC's Executive Director of Place, Economy & Environment, I have yet to have a reply that helps move forward any development of the footpath on the bend in Church Street or beyond and the possible acquisition of land by the SRA to enlarge the car park and reduce the amount of cars parking on the road. I hope to have an update for the PC meeting.

Double Yellow Lines on High Street

I am still waiting to find out what progress there is with the consultation and decision on the yellow lines for the High Street and am still chasing. I hope to have an update for the PC meeting.

Dermot Bambridge - 4th March 2025