

## 9. Appendix B

### SUMMARY OF MAIN COMMENTS MADE ON THE DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS

#### 1) STATUTORY BUDGET CONSULTATION MEETING – 23<sup>rd</sup> JANUARY 2020

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>I understand the High Street Action Zone will be funded by the government and the Council. Does the Council get anything back? What is the position regarding ownership of flats above properties?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Andrew Dutton)</b></p>	<p><i>Part of the scheme is match funded. Historic England and land/property owners in the zone would also make a contribution.</i></p> <p><i>Table 18 of the Executive report gives a summary of the funding position.</i></p> <p><b>(Cllr Lloyd Bunday)</b> <b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Where can we send budget responses? No email address is given on the Council's website.</p> <p><b>(Cllr Anne Lee)</b></p>	<p><i>Comments to be sent to <a href="mailto:markdickenson@kettering.gov.uk">markdickenson@kettering.gov.uk</a>. Comments will form part of the report to the Executive on 19<sup>th</sup> February</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

#### 2) KETTERING TOWN FORUM – 27<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2020

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>At last year's budget proposals for a reduction in parking charges were rejected due to the fact it would result in a loss of income for the council. Car parking usage has decreased significantly over the last year so the question is, will the council review its assumptions around car parking charges and car parking income?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw)</b></p>	<p>Parking charges have been a pressure in 2019/20 where we have seen a reduction in fees. This reduction has been reflected in the 2020/21 draft budget.</p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p> <p>Two years ago, the Executive agreed not to alter or change the car parking charges for a period of two years. Currently there is a review taking place in which proposals for a new pilot scheme will be presented to members of the Executive Committee in February.</p> <p><b>(Cllr Response)</b></p>
<p>The number of Cremations has reduced, are we likely to see figures continue to fall in 2020/21?</p> <p><b>(Cllr James Burton – Deputy Mayor)</b></p>	<p>A number of new and similarly functioning facilities have opened in the area which naturally has had an effect on business, but we are expecting this to level out. A reduction has been reflected in both the revised and draft budgets.</p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

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<p>Are the Houses of Multiple Occupation Fees on Page 38 paid annually?</p> <p><b>(Cllr James Burton – Deputy Mayor)</b></p>	<p>The Houses of Multiple Occupation fees are set by the Central Licensing Unit and are paid every five years.</p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

### 3) RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT – 28<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2020

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>Will the Fair Funding Review impact on 2020/21 budgets, or is it a more “medium-term” consideration?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw)</b></p>	<p><i>The Fair Funding Review will not impact the 2020/2021 budget, it is envisaged this will take effect from 2021/2022</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>What is happening regarding public consultation on the budget? Are there any leaflets available, a page on website or a way people can send in their comments?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw)</b></p>	<p><i>The public were invited to attend the Budget Consultation meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. There is reference to that meeting on the Council’s website and if anyone wishes to submit comments they can be emailed through to the Head of Resources.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>In relation to the decriminalised parking element of the budget, is it possible to have further information on the breakdown of that budgetary line so we can be confident that decriminalised parking enforcement will pay for itself?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw)</b></p>	<p><i>A breakdown of those figures were provided. To arrive at those figures KBC were required to submit a business plan to the county council and then to the Department of Transport to illustrate that it could technically fulfil the legislative requirements and that the service would not operate as a money-making exercise or as one expecting to make a loss. The business case included county council experiences regarding fee income. We will take a structured approach, but until the service begins, we will not know exact income levels. However, over a period of years it is intended to balance itself.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Is there an element or reserve of the budget to top up any dip in revenue from parking tickets?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Jim Hakewill)</b></p>	<p><i>Should any deficit arise we would look to mitigate this from other existing budgets. There is a contingency budget of £150,000 and if the deficit could not be funded through this we would look to use reserves.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

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<p>The other three authorities that will form part of the North Northants Unitary Authority operate the county council parking enforcement system. What will happen in April 2021 if the three other authorities like their existing system? Have we purchased software systems to issue parking tickets or are we utilising the county council system?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Jim Hakewill)</b></p>	<p><i>There is no definitive answer regarding disaggregation of parking enforcement yet, those conversations are due to take place. Essentially, the North Northants Unitary Authority will have two systems in place and will have the opportunity to decide which is the more effective over time</i></p> <p><i>We have adopted new software that is linked into the county council's back office providing a certain level of coherence for the unitary authorities after 2021.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Does the budget as presented tonight provide for the salaries of the complete number of 17 traffic wardens given that at the 1<sup>st</sup> April, they will not all be in post?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Jim Hakewill)</b></p>	<p><i>Yes, the budget being proposed is for all 17 members of staff. We will go into the start of the financial year a little light on numbers but expect to be fully staffed during April.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Budgetary line PS7/PS8 and income of £1.15m for fees and charges, with £514,000 of that now expected from car park income. We have learned that the Executive Committee will be conducting a review of car parking charges. How has that £514,000 figure been calculated in relation to any possible changes as a result of that review?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw)</b></p>	<p><i>In terms of arriving at the figure of £514,000, the budget for 2019/20 was £614,000 with in year pressures of £100,000 identified. We have extrapolated those figures forward assuming the same levels of income for 2020/21 as for 2019/20.</i></p> <p><i>The budget does not allow for parking income changes at this stage.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Page 45 of the Capital Programme; there is a revised budget of £310,000 for land acquisition and pre-contract works at Stamford Road. However, there does not seem to be an amount of money allocated to provide the housing we were looking to build at that location.</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mike Tebbutt)</b></p>	<p><i>That is correct, we need to go through the viability stage for that site and then bring that scheme back through a separate approval process to bring it into the budget.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Page 46 of the Capital Programme has a CCTV element of £50,000. The quality of the imaging collected by our cameras is not usually of evidential quality and does not make use of Auto Number Plate Recognition (ANPR). Will this budget of £50,000 correct some of that?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mike Tebbutt)</b></p>	<p><i>The £50,000 in the budget is to improve the current CCTV system. It will not have ANPR functionality but will improve the image quality.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

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<p>The replacement IT System with an original £90,000 budget for the current year now shows as £0 for the revised 2019/20 budget. Has the work been completed or is it no longer required?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mike Tebbutt)</b></p>	<p><i>The system was planned for Development Services; however, a decision was taken to defer this system.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Page 27, budgetary line DL1 in relation to elections, does the cost of a General Election get reimbursed from central government? In 2021 there is £229,000 budgeted for elections. Is this for the PFCC election and how can the budget be so low if it is a Borough-wide election?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Jim Hakewill)</b></p>	<p><i>The 2019/20 figures reflect the costs associated with a general election and the European elections. General, European and Police and Crime Commissioner elections are funded from Electoral Commission.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Page 19, in relation to Development Control, the original budget for 2019/20 was £529,000, revised to £431,000 and for 2020/21 is set at £496,000. These are quite large variances?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Jim Hakewill)</b></p>	<p><i>This is in relation to income levels as a demand-led service. The original budget had predicted income of £788,000 which is now projected to be £887,000 at the end of this financial year. We have not included all of this income in the 2020/21 budget due to the service being demand-led, but have allowed for a further £30,000 income in 2020/21.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>At what point would the Council's auditors say we are not levying a suitable amount of Council Tax because for the last three years officers have made increase recommendations to the Council leadership?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Jim Hakewill)</b></p>	<p><i>The auditors issue a Value for Money opinion, but in terms of giving advice and telling the Council it had to raise Council Tax rates, this is not something they would do. This is a political decision.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Use of the term efficiencies as part of the budget is misleading as income generation is not an efficiency.</p> <p><b>(Cllr Jim Hakewill)</b></p>	<p><i>We always tried to identify and clearly present a composition that provides a scale of additional income or a reduction in expenditure. We can, in future, have separate headings that specifically state additional income and reductions in expenditure.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

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<p>Where is the budget for buying properties to progress homelessness issues?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw)</b></p>	<p><i>It is detailed on Page 46 as Housing and homelessness prevention.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>The Commercial Investment Strategy has a budget of £20.160 million, that is a very specific figure, are there already investments lined up?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw)</b></p>	<p><i>The £20 million budget relates to acquisition of new commercial investments, the additional £160,000 is for capital investment at Haylock House following its acquisition.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>The £150,000 Contingency Fund referred to earlier, will that be different for our final year?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Mick Scrimshaw)</b></p>	<p><i>There is no difference between the years.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

### 4) A6 TOWNS FORUM – 29<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2020

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>I have three questions on pages 3, 4 and 8.</p> <p>On page 3 the business rates prediction is the same for 5 years. Are we expecting some resurrection in high streets? Is there no impact on High Street business rates?</p> <p>Is there a presumption that premises will be retained in the unitary authority in relation to the depreciation adjustment on page 4?</p> <p>In relation to the costs of running parking services on Page 4 and the income from them, with the running down of the High Street it seems as if parking costs are preventing people coming into the town centre.</p> <p>Are there any increases in parking fees planned?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Allan Matthews)</b></p>	<p><i>That section on the MTFs relates to the 'Future Spending Review Period'. At this moment we have no further information on the finance settlement for future years, hence the Business Rates figure has remained as per the current year. We are awaiting the fair funding review which will impact on the settlement we get from the government.</i></p> <p><i>The depreciation adjustment relates to KBC only. We have had to set the budget on the basis Kettering Borough Council will remain a sovereign council. The budget does not take into account what premises may or may not be used in the unitary authority.</i></p> <p><i>The increase is as a result of the appointment of additional parking wardens plus other associated costs for civil parking enforcement.</i></p> <p><i>No, the increase in income relates to Civil Parking enforcement not pay and display fees.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

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<p>The tax freeze policy is no longer sustainable and Kettering Borough Council should increase the council tax. From 2013, the County Council increased council tax to the maximum permissible by the government. It is unsustainable to retain at zero. This causes KBC a problem. With advent of unitary authorities we will have to harmonise council tax. This will mean a significant shock to the taxpayers of Kettering.</p> <p>New Homes Bonus was for six years, now four years and will be going down to two years. After 2022/23 New Homes Bonus expires. There is a significant risk in not increasing the council tax.</p> <p>The £1.734m in efficiencies made is more than the total revenue of the Council. Commercial investment is not an efficiency, although staff savings are. The use of the term is misleading.</p> <p>I am pleased to see that in the medium term financial plan – efficiencies is in inverted commas. I have made this point for several years. The budget should show additional funding or revenue and a smaller amount for efficiencies. This does not make sense.</p> <p><b>(Cllr Jim Hakewill)</b></p>	<p><b><i>Comment Noted</i></b></p>
<p>I have looked at the figures in the context of the organisation. Northamptonshire County Council has difficulty funding adult social care, children's services and highways maintenance. Reorganisation is an attempt to strengthen local government in the county. It is not just a question of wording, the total income that comes from the unitary authority must make up for things not being done properly at the moment. The County Council is not doing its job properly, and we will have to contribute to adult social care and children's services, libraries and highways in the future.</p> <p>I am pleased to hear Kettering going to have a town council. The only buoyancy in the system is in parish and town councils, which can increase precepts without limit. Burton Latimer is having to increase its precept</p>	<p><i>Council tax harmonisation is part of the unitary process and will need to be considered by the shadow authority.</i></p> <p><i>We have not been made aware of any capping of parish precepts from the government.</i></p> <p><b><i>(Officer response)</i></b></p>

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<p>considerably to compensate for what the County Council is not doing.</p> <p>How will the rate be set and will the government put a limit on the council tax rate for the unitary, or will it take the same view as this year and put a cap on it?</p> <p>Has there been any signal that the government is considering capping town and parish councils?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Christopher Groome)</b></p>	

### 5) RURAL FORUM – 30<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2020

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>The report suggests that increasing Council Tax to the threshold level would generate £163,000 of income. Has that already been included in the budget, as there is an increase in Council Tax income in the figures?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Paul Gooding)</b></p>	<p><i>An increase in council tax rates has not been reflected in the budget, the increase in the figures in the report relates to an increase in the council tax base not an increase in the council tax rates.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer response)</b></p> <p><i>Raising Council Tax to the £5 threshold would yield £168,000. Several years ago the Council embarked on a Commercial Strategy which is reflected in the Capital Programme. This Strategy currently contributes £1.385m and in 2020/21 increases by a further £500,000 to £1.885m – this is far in excess of the Council Tax yield and follows the Conservative strategy of not taxing residents for the sake of taxing.</i></p> <p><b>(Cllr Response)</b></p>

### 6) MONITORING & AUDIT – 4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>In relation to the proposed rent increase of 2.7%, has any assessment taken place as to whether an increase may cause financial difficulties for our tenants?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Cliff Moreton)</b></p>	<p><i>The Tenants' Forum represents Council tenants and the proposed 2.7% increase was discussed at the November meeting of the forum. The representatives of the forum were receptive to the 2.7% increase.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

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<p>Our level of Council Tax support is one of the lowest in the country. For two years we have decided to the keep Council Tax support at the same level, but there is no mention of it in this budget.</p> <p><b>(Cllr Anne Lee)</b></p>	<p><i>Council Tax Support was reported to the Executive Committee in September. The Committee was asked whether it wished to proceed with a formal consultation exercise however it decided not to in favour of freezing Council Tax support at the current rate.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>There are a lot of vacant posts and given the costs of employing agency staff have we been actively recruiting to fill those posts?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Anne Lee)</b></p>	<p><i>There are certain services areas where we would look to use agency staff, for example the Refuse Service. We make a conscious choice to use agency staff at times; it may be difficult to recruit to certain posts or specific knowledge is needed at a certain point. Salaries across the organisation are being delivered within budget.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>Where is the budget for fighting climate change? Where are the figures for the amount spent last year and what is the figure for next year?</p> <p><b>(Cllr Anne Lee)</b></p>	<p><i>The figures for this are embedded in service area budgets across the organisation.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p> <p><i>Through our Climate Change Champions there is an ongoing process of costings around climate change implications.</i></p> <p><b>(Portfolio Holder for Strategic Delivery &amp; the Environment Response)</b></p>

### 7) TENANTS FORUM – 6<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020

Item / Issue	Summary of Response Given
<p>Will rents be looked at across the North and West for Harmonisation?</p> <p><b>(Tenant Question)</b></p>	<p><i>The harmonisation of Rents and Council Tax will be considered as part of one of the Unitary Working Groups. Ultimately this will be a decision for the Shadow Authorities.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>
<p>It would have been helpful to have seen a comparison with the 2019/20 budget.</p> <p><b>(Cllr Maggie Don)</b></p>	<p><i>We have shown the changes from the 2019/20 to the 2020/21 budget on the slides presented. The detail of the 2019/20 budget is contained within the detailed budget papers in the January Executive Report.</i></p> <p><b>(Officer Response)</b></p>

8) PUBLIC RESPONSES

Comments
<p>I give below my main priorities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A park and ride feasibility study. If this went ahead it would stop the traffic jams in Kettering and also help the environment.</li> <li>2. Stop giving planning permission for out of town shopping centres.</li> <li>3. Local social housing to rent this would help with the homeless crisis.</li> <li>4. Extra policing to prevent crime.</li> </ol> <p>I hope you will consider the points I have raised.</p> <p><b>(Member of Public email)</b></p> <p><i>These comments will be presented to the Executive</i></p> <p><b>(Officer response)</b></p>
<p>Dear Cllr Roberts,</p> <p>Please can I submit the following on behalf of Brightkidz social enterprise in relation to the Budget Consultation Process on 23 January.</p> <p>I have looked through the Draft Budget Booklet to see what funding is being allocated to enable Kettering Borough Council to address climate change. It's complicated of course as I realise the potential actions are varied and fall within different departments. However it is essential we ensure climate change actions get the funding needed.</p> <p>Our specific interest regarding climate change is around transport - reducing car dependency and increasing the amount of safe, active, sustainable travel in the area. As you know, transport is the greatest source of CO2 emissions in the UK and is also the fastest growing. It is also something everyone can influence and latest government travel survey data shows most people would like to reduce their car use and over 70% of people would like to cycle.</p> <p>Kettering Borough Council has already expressed its willingness to promote walking and cycling which is excellent. This will not only help reduce CO2 emissions but has other benefits such as improvements in health and air quality and access to work/training. It can also help Kettering reduce the number of road casualties - our town has the highest growth in KSIs (killed or seriously injured) in the county, source: NCC Adopted Road Safety Strategy.</p> <p>We would therefore suggest the budget includes funding to cover the following:</p> <p><b>1. Development and delivery of a town centre travel plan</b>, estimate £5000 - £10,000 (if delivered by Brightkidz).</p>

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A travel plan is different from a transport plan (which KBC already have although due to update and which is more about the engineering measures with links to the Public Realm strategy).

A travel plan is more about 'soft measures' eg behaviour change, promoting what is already out there, bringing relevant partners together for bigger impact, changing attitudes, identifying and addressing barriers to active travel etc. It would involve a site audit, various mode of travel surveys and working with the community as partners to identify existing actions and future actions. It would lead to accreditation under the DfT-backed Modeshift STARs (Sustainable Travel Accredited and Recognised) scheme which is also an excellent framework for measuring impact.

I would estimate it would cost **£5,000- £10,000** for Brightkidz to do this plan and carry out some of the behaviour change initiatives which would involve the wider town centre community. The plan itself may help leverage more funding for related initiatives if the council could kick it off, eg police funding for bike security campaign.

This is the sort of thing which could strengthen a second bid for Future High Streets funding as it would prove excellent community engagement. (There is due to be a second round for FHSF; no date announcement made yet, but Kettering needs to be ready... but that's another subject).

### **2 Grant scheme to promote active travel in the Borough**

My second suggestion is to introduce a grant scheme for local organisations eg businesses, schools, community organisations to get funding to encourage and enable cycling to work/school etc. This could be used for capital costs eg secure/covered cycle storage, showers, lockers etc. It could even require 25% match funding by the organisation to prove their commitment and draw more funding in. It needs to be easy to apply for and maybe even time-limited so they try hard to get it ASAP (so the impact is quicker). You can call it a trial to justify the time limit! Or there could be a fixed total amount in the 'pot' which would encourage people to apply quickly. I don't know how much you would budget for this- maybe **£50,000**? Alternatively you could offer this cycle support grant as a reward for any organisation completing its own accredited travel plan so it can implement planned actions such as installing cycle storage.

### **3. Cycle training and cycle confidence training within the Borough**

We were shocked to find out around 50% of pupils of all ages at a local primary school cannot cycle... even some pupils at local secondaries cannot cycle! This means they cannot take part in the government's part-funded Bikeability training. We also know many adults learnt to cycle as children but need confidence to get back on their bikes. Therefore some funding to support cycle training would have a great impact on the town. Schools are so strapped for cash but adults could match fund theirs I think. I would suggest an initial **£15,000** funding pot eg to enable us to deliver this in partnership with Youthworks.

### **4. Kettering borough active travel communications campaign**

It would be good to offer something visible Borough-wide (as the travel plan would initially be just for Kettering town centre ). This could be led by the KBC Comms team or outsourced - but should be in partnership with the local community. Is there any **internal budget** to cover this and any other climate change communications campaigns?

### **5. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**

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With the growth in East Kettering, it is essential that the costly infrastructure changes are well managed and coordinated as part of a whole-town plan. I would suggest budgeting for a sustainable transport specialist to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This will help prove Kettering has a vision too despite the constraints of the move to unitary. I know a reputable consultant who would charge **£6k to £15k** for this depending on depth of plan. A town centre travel plan would complement this.

### 6. Existing Plans

I know Lisa Hyde has mentioned having secure, covered cycle storage installed in the town centre and possibly a workplace travel plan for KBC staff. I'm not sure if there is already budget set aside for these but would presume so.

### 7. Internal Budgets for 'Climate Change' Adaptations

I know many KBC staff will care about climate change and be keen to implement measures within their work. I also understand you have a strong culture of staff being able to put forward their own ideas... so there may be ideas which have not come up yet. If staff are organising events or campaigns it would be good for them to have the resources to embed climate actions within those projects. For example the next Health and Wellbeing festival is due to be held at Boughton House - an amazing venue - but unless a shuttle bus service is laid on and well publicised it will only be accessible to those who drive and so there will be lots of car journeys. A 'climate change' fund could cover the cost of this and enable the whole event to be much more sustainable (and accessible).

Thank you for considering this submission. Please let me know if you need any further information. We look forward to hearing how these ideas are received.

Best wishes

**(Brightkidz email)**

*A Climate Change Policy has been adopted by the Council. Whilst there is no specific budget heading, climate change considerations are embedded in service area budgets across the organisation.*

*With reference to the specific items raised, the Council follows relevant procurement legislation and the Councils Constitution when procuring goods and services.*

**(Officer response)**