

Value for Money

Leighton-Linslade Town Council is mindful of its responsibilities and duties to the community, including ensuring that best value for money is obtained at all times, with taxpayer's precept contributions spent to best advantage for the parish and its residents.

In setting its annual budget, the Town Council considers the cost of ongoing projects and services, as well as the costs involved in maintaining the assets of the parish, such as parks, sports pitches, pavilions and cemeteries. Provision is also made in the budget for new projects or objectives as identified following consultation with residents or to meet the clear needs of the community. Budget proposals are reviewed each year by standing Committees prior to ratification by Council each January.

A number of policies and procedures exist to ensure best value, including most notably the Town Council's Financial Regulations. Any requests for approval of expenditure must include evidence of having sought best value, usually by sourcing at least three quotations for goods and services. In instances of significant expenditure, a formal tender process will be followed. Expenditure must be authorised by a budget holder, the Town Clerk or by Committee, depending on the level of funds involved in each case.

Any significant expenditure and all tenders sought will be brought to the relevant Committee for review and authorisation to proceed. The Committee will need to be satisfied that the recommended provider meets a number of criteria including value for money.

In addition to the ongoing monitoring of budgets by officers, each standing Committee receives a detailed budget monitoring report on a quarterly basis. This enables the Committee to review and monitor expenditure compared to budget throughout the year and provides an opportunity for questions to be raised. The Town Council's Finance Officer and accountant will maintain an overarching responsibility for ensuring income and expenditure are clearly and correctly reported to Council.

One of the Town Council's most significant costs is that of staffing. The current staffing structure was established following organisational change in 2013-2014, to ensure that staffing levels were appropriate to deliver services and projects to the best possible standards. Staff salaries are based on national scales across the sector and all job descriptions are evaluated independently by the Town Council's retained Human Resources consultant. This ensures that salaries are fair and in line with national standards within the sector.