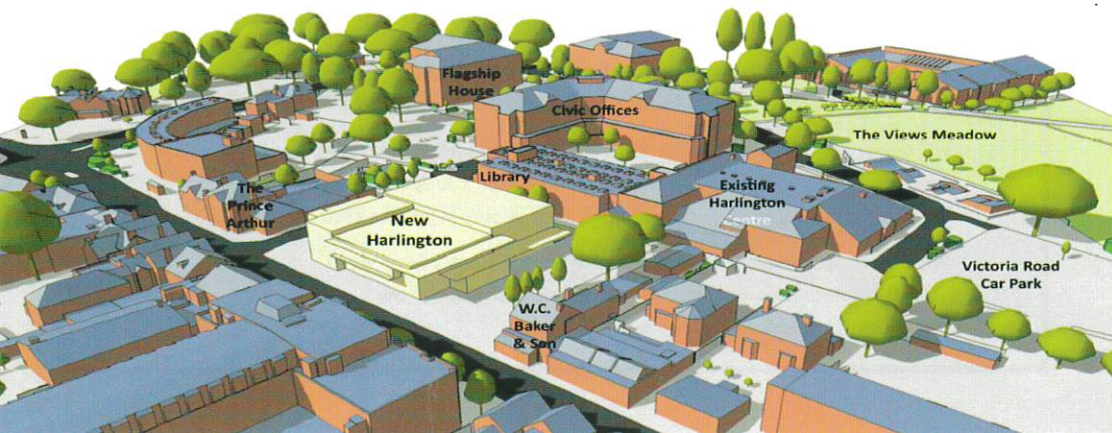


The need to raise the Local Council Tax for Financial Year 2016/17



Public Notice of Council Tax Increase

Why are we raising the Local Council Tax for Financial Year 2016/17?

- The Town Council has managed to limit the Annual Parish Band D Household Tax to £55.63, an increase of £1.83 over the past five year period but regulatory, inflationary and other pressures now make it necessary to increase the Parish Tax if we are to maintain the current level of services we provide.
- The increase in the number of houses that Central Government determines cannot be charged Local Council Tax due to benefits corrections has given rise to a loss of income of £25,256 over the last three years. Next year the 'National Living Wage' comes into play and also all Staff will be entitled to join the government regulated Work Place Pension scheme.
- The Senior Staff have been challenged to achieve efficiency savings wherever possible, but it still leaves us facing a shortfall in our projected budget of £50,000 (some 9% of our tax income).
- To ensure we maintain our current level of services and balance the budget we are moved to raise the Parish Band D Household Tax by £4.81 to £60.44 per annum, the equivalent of 9p/week/household.



A New Harlington

- Having raised expectations through the public displays of projects proposed by Fleet Town Council, it is considered essential that we act, not just talk about these projects; maintain momentum and progress some key projects beyond just concepts and schematics.
- The redevelopment or the major refurbishment of the Harlington represents potentially the biggest investment in the town centre for decades.
- The funds required to undertake the technical work to get us to the point of going to tender will be met through a further increase in the current Parish Tax level.
- The aim is to produce the design details for a community / entertainment facility with a retractable 300 tiered seat auditorium and a fixed 100 seater balcony, together with a suitable modern stage and necessary supporting facilities.
- We are engaged in detailed discussions with HCC Library Services to ascertain whether they wish to make the refurbishment of the Library form part of a combined new building.





Examples of similar performance spaces

Why Now?

- We need the funds to finance all the preliminary works outlined above and the earliest we can raise the money is April this year. We have to submit our proposed 2016/17 tax level to Hart District Council in January 2016 or wait another year. We feel Fleet has waited long enough for a public facility that the town deserves. The additional funds will be ring fenced solely for the Harlington Project.
- Consultancy briefs will be drawn up to engage Architects, Engineers and Planners to commence design work as soon as practical in 2016 - 17.
- The completion of the first phase of the preliminary activity will give you the opportunity to see exactly what the new facility will look like, how it will function and how it sits in the local environment, before we commit to long term borrowing to fund the project and seek Outline Planning Approval for a Development Proposal.

How will this affect a Band D household?

- In order to allow the overall project to proceed to the detailed design phase necessary to obtain full Planning Approval, the Town Council Tax level for 2016-17 Band D households will need to be raised by a further £39.37 per year bringing the total band D rate to £99.81.
- The overall increase is still only 85p/week/Band D household, the equivalent of about one third of a cup of café bought coffee/week.
- We have deliberately split the increase in the Council Tax into two separate elements so that the cost of developing the Harlington is totally transparent and isolated from the operational cost of running the Town Council and can be separately audited.

The Tax increase will only add the cost of a third of a cup of coffee (café bought) per week per household



Our commitment to our residents

- Any surplus, from the development and design stages will be reinvested in the Harlington development to reduce the long term borrowing.
- Until we have a clear idea of the overall project cost, it is impossible to predict the future level of council tax, however our hope is that we will not have to raise the tax any further, but if we do we will have the full supporting evidence to substantiate the increase.
- The Town Council will turn to the residents of Fleet to secure an endorsement to commit to a long term borrowing agreement to fund the final project construction phase.

Average Band D Household Council Tax

