

Welcome Back Fund

We as a Council have been working hard to maximise the full £250,000 awarded to us through the Government's Welcome Back Fund, which is helping us provide improvements and promotional campaigns for boosting footfall on our high streets.

Over the festive season, you will have seen the promotional banners and street performances, including the Bubble Elf stilt walker in Stamford, welcoming visitors and residents back to the high street for their local Christmas shopping.

We have much more lined up for the next few months, including events and local improvements, which we will be announcing very shortly and we are working closely with our local businesses to ensure that this money really does benefit them.

Of course, there is still much uncertainty regarding Omicron and the Government guidelines for staying safe in our communities, so we are continuing to work closely with the various government agencies to ensure we are promoting activities which support our local economy whilst also protecting our residents from the virus.

Council Tax Consultation

Ahead of the new financial year, SKDC are offering residents and businesses the chance to have their say on council tax proposals for 2022/23, with a two-week-long consultation commencing on Friday 14th January.

The consultation asks for views on a proposal to increase the SKDC share of Council Tax by £5 for properties in Band D for the 2022/23 financial year. The increase for households in Bands A, B, and C would be less than £5, while those in Bands E, F, G, and H would see an average increase between £5-10.

The consultation will outline how SKDC funds its services and it will provide an update on our existing projects in priority areas, such as growth and the economy, housing, healthy and strong communities, the environment, and performance.

In a challenging time for local authorities, we are naturally focused on safeguarding the quality of our services, while at the same time delivering on our ambitions for the future, and this involves utilising what we have, streamlining costs where possible, and attracting funding from other sources. Through increasing council tax for Band D properties by £5 alone, we will be able to generate around £250,000 of additional income in the next financial year.

Of course, the majority of council tax receipts go to Lincolnshire County Council, as well as contributions to Lincolnshire Police, Fire and Rescue Service, and our local parishes.

A decision will be made in early March on our element of Council Tax for 2022/23.

Deepings Leisure Consultation

Another upcoming consultation will be on the proposed refurbishment of the Deepings Leisure Centre, which we hope to reopen as soon as possible whilst ensuring that the facility meets the needs of an active community.

SKDC recently approved plans for a comprehensive £10.7m refurbishment of the leisure centre, preferring this option over more minor modifications to the centre. Our plan is to embark on a full

remodelling, which will include reconfiguring the swimming pool, sports hall, and squash courts, as well as expanding gym capacity and delivering new studios and changing facilities.

The upcoming consultation will allow residents from across the south of the District to feed into the proposals, ensuring that the revamped facility is shaped around the needs of its users and that our residents have a modern space to engage in sports and social activities.

Many sports groups rely on the Deepings Leisure Centre for their regular classes and it is important that these vital community groups are listened to before changes get underway. The date of this consultation will be announced in the coming months.

Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant

SKDC is set to receive £1.3m in funding from the Government to support businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors impacted by the Omicron variant.

Businesses such as restaurants, hotels, and cinemas will be able to apply for one-off grants of up to £6,000 per premises following a difficult Christmas period for the industry amidst understandable concern over Omicron.

We will also be receiving a top-up of over £250,000 to the COVID support grants distributed by our partners InvestSK, to help businesses who continue to be impacted by the pandemic.

InvestSK has helped distribute over £51m in support grants to over 3,000 businesses since the start of the pandemic, and they will continue to help businesses access the grants available to them.