

WASHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL



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Finance Committee Meeting

MINUTES of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Monday 6th January 2025 at Washington Village Hall (Doré Room)

PRESENT: Cllr S Buddell, Cllr B. Hanvey, Cllr P Heeley (Chairman), Cllr T Keech and Cllr A Lisher

ALSO: Clerk to the Council. There were no members of the public.

ABSENT: Cllr A. Perkins

The meeting was opened by the Chairman at 7:00pm.

F/25/1/1 Apologies

The Committee **RESOLVED** to **ACCEPT** apologies from Cllr Perkins.

F/25/1/2 Declarations of Interest

None declared as defined under the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Code of Conduct.

F/25/1/3 Minutes of the last meeting

The Committee **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting on 25th November 2025.

F/25/1/4 Draft 2025/26 Budget and Precept

The Chairman presented the Working Party's draft budget proposals for the Council's £56,173 estimated 2025/26 operating costs and a precept request of £47,320 , equivalent to £42.14 per Band D household.

The Chairman explained that the Working Party had prepared a tight budget to ensure focus on cost control and to follow the Council's brief to limit any precept increase to the same 5% cap for principal authorities. Any higher would be difficult to justify, he said, given the still quite generous reserves.

However, some operating costs will escalate outside the Council's control most significantly from the Government's rise in National Insurance rates from April 2025. This would increase the employment contributions for the Council by 33.7%.

The Chairman explained that the proposed budget would be achieved through a number of measures including the following:

- Where possible items have been removed from the budget where there has been no historic spend to ensure that there is no "padding" of costs.
- Reassignment of reserves from specific to more general reserves to ensure a degree of more flexibility to utilise the reserves
- Reduction of overall general reserves from £66,000 to £58,000, but this would still allow 9-10 months of expenditure against operating costs.
- The Government increase in National Insurance requirement would be covered by the budget. Any overspend could be funded from the Council's reserves contingency for operating costs.
- CIL monies of £47k were separate from the budget, some of which was ring-fenced for special projects. Any necessary Council improvements to infrastructure which benefit the community, and which could not be sufficiently met from the budget, could be funded from CIL.

It was noted that the budget shortfall for operating costs could be met from the anticipated £6,000 income and general reserves.

Following a discussion, the Committee **RESOLVED** unanimously to recommend the proposed 2025/26 budget and precept without amendment to Full Council for approval.

It was further agreed that Cllr Keech would assist in aligning the net and gross figures for salary and employer contributions with the budget figures on the Council's accounting program.

Cllr Buddell thanked the Working Party for putting the proposals together.

F/25/1/5 Next Finance Committee Meeting.

To be agreed when required.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 7:23pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

21-7-25