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**Finance Committee Meeting**

**Monday 20th November 2023 at 6:30pm**

**in the Washington Village Hall (Doré Room)**

**Draft MINUTES** of the Finance Meeting to be held on Monday 20th November 2023 at 6:30pm at Washington Village Hall (Dore Room).

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

**ALSO:** Clerk to the Council Ms Z Savill

**MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**: 14

**ABSENT**: 0

The Meeting was opened by the Chairman at 6:30pm

**FF/23/11/3 To Receive and accept apologies for absence.**

 None.

**F/23/11/2 To Record declarations of interest from members in any item to be discussed**

 None.

**F/23/11/3 To Approve Minutes of the last Finance Meeting of 4th September 2023**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the draft minutes of the Finance

Committee Meeting on 4th September 2023

**F/23/11/4 To Report the Council’s current budget position**

 The Council’s current budget position was discussed under the next item.

**F/23/11/5 To Receive, Review and Recommend the draft 2024/25 budget and precept**

 Supporting papers and draft proposals for the 2024/25 draft budget were

 prepared by the Clerk/RFO and previously circulated. The Chairman reported on

 the Council’s current budget position and proposed budget requirement for

 2024/25. It was noted that the tax base for next year would be 1118.7, a slight

 reduction on the current year’s 1120.5. The RFO advised on the budget and

 and explained the purpose of building contingencies in earmarked

 reserves especially for the replacement of costly assets like playground

 equipment, and works to the Council’s ageing and large tree stock.

 Members discussed various options to balance the £10,642 shortfall in the draft

 £59,808 operating requirement. It was generally agreed this could be

 achieved with a 5% increase in the precept and a reduction in reserves.

 The Chairman proposed and it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to recommend in

 principal a 5% increase in the precept. This would be subject to anticipated

 expenditure up to 31st March 2024, the forthcoming salary review by

 the Personnel Committee, and further advice on which reserves to maintain.

 Cllr Heeley to convene a finance working party meeting to prepare

 the recommendation of the draft budget to Full Council. Clerk to provide

 projected year end costs for the meeting.

**F/23/11/6 To Review business savings accounts for recommendation to Full Council.**

 Members discussed the option of opening another business savings

 account to protect the Council’s funds should they exceed the Financial

 Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) threshold. It was noted that

 funds in the operating account had recently almost exceeded this but the

 balance had steadily decreased and no further income was anticipated

 in the current financial year. Funds in the Council’s business savings account

 was at the maximum £85,000 threshold and was made up of CIL monies

 to date. More CIL monies were due from the Old Clayton Kennels development

 but it was noted this would likely be in the next financial year, subject to legal

 agreements between the local planning authority and the developers.

 Members also considered the option of transferring £20,000 or more into

 a higher interest option of the Council’s Nationwide account. The Chairman

 reported this would generate £1,000 interest for ratepayers over a year fixed at

 5%, and would help meet some of the Council’s operating requirement in the

 next financial year. For 95 days’ notice, the rate would be 3.8%. The RFO advised

 against locking funds for one year. The Council had already committed

 in principle to spending all the CIL funds and would need earlier access to meet

 payments.

 Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED** unanimously to agree to the principal of

 opening another business savings account for the FSCS protection, to be

 reviewed in the new year; and to look at the option of transferring some funds

 into a shorter term, higher interest account with Nationwide. Clerk to research

 options with the bank and report to the next meeting with a view to transferring

 funds before the end of the year.

**F/23/11/7 To Agree date of next meeting**

 To be arranged as and when required.

 There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was closed at

 19:17hrs.

**Signed……………………………………………………………….**

**Dated…………………………………………………………………**