

WHPC Meeting 3rd January 2024

Agenda Item 24/012

Finance Working Group: 2024-25 Budget and Precept

Purpose

For Councillors to formally resolve the Precept demand for submission by the Clerk/RFO to EDDC.

Background

At the WHPC meeting on 5th December 2023 (agenda item 23/371) Councillors considered:

- revised 2023-24 forecast full year costs
- timetable for submission of the Precept Demand to EDDC in mid-January
- draft budget for 2024-25
- the impact of various scenarios on the Precept ranging from zero increase to 10% increase

Councillors agreed

- a. all 2024-25 project costs will be funded from S106, CIL, Reserves or third party grant funding as appropriate, subject to eligibility.
- b. the 2024-25 budget should be set at £57,417 and noted that there will therefore be a shortfall against the Precept if it remains unchanged at £56,875.
- c. Councillors discussed various Precept scenarios ranging from no increase to +10%. The Council's operational costs are increasing but Councillors are mindful that residents have been subjected to steep rises in the cost of living. Although the inflation rate in November was 3.9% - somewhat less than the peak of 11% in October 2022 (a 41-year record high) – food and energy prices are still going up. Therefore, Councillors agreed that, rather than increasing the Precept to cover the budget shortfall, the Council would use some of its Reserves as necessary. This would enable the Precept to remain unchanged at £56,875 – a Council Tax Band D equivalent of £48.95 (subject to confirmation of the tax base which varies slightly from year to year). Cllrs were satisfied that sufficient Reserves were available if necessary.

Finance Working Group recommendation

- To submit a 2024-25 Precept Demand of £56,875 which is unchanged from the previous three years.

This would represent an unchanged Precept for the fourth year.

For consideration

Councillors to formally resolve, if appropriate,

- a. To set a 2024-25 budget at £57,417.
- b. for the Clerk/RFO to submit a Precept Demand for 2024-25 of £56,875 to EDDC
- c. to use existing reserves, if necessary, to fund expenditure above Precept.