

Background papers for Finance & Policy 11th November 2013

1. Election of vice chair no papers
2. Apologies – no papers
3. Declarations - no papers
4. Public comment – no papers
5. Minutes of 25th March 2013 attached
6.
 - a) Stress policy (some minor wording changes and the overall layout with policy number and amendment details)
 - b) Complaints procedure (minor changes to the name and address of the monitoring officer and the overall layout with policy number and amendment details)
 - c) Bullying and Harassment policy (external) new policy based on that of Uckfield and recommended by the personnel committee

NB All other policies have also been amended but in format and layout only and these will be presented at the annual statutory meeting as no material changes have been made. Also other policies are being created and amended and will be presented to either finance or full council as appropriate.

7.
 - a) Ear Marked reserves
Short report on the current general reserves and ear marked reserves for discussion
 - b) Brief report on these two suggested reserves
 - c) Brief report on the significance of a decision on the High Street toilets to the budget
 - d) Personnel budget as per sheet unless amendments made at the meeting on 11th; Planning as presented £200 (reduction of £300) unless amendments made at meeting on 11th.
 - e) Attached full budget sheets most items are fixed through contract. **Please ask questions prior to the meeting**
 - f) It is expected that the overall income to the budget via the grant from Wealden will reduce by approximately £4543 see attached papers. This cannot be clarified until after WDC have formally resolved the decision. It is not yet known when this decision will be

taken but the Town Council cannot make a material decision on the precept until AFTER this figure is known.

g) In former years the tax base has been around 2920. This calculation is based on the number of houses that actually are expected to pay council tax. It is a calculation made by WDC and at the beginning of December a notification is made to the Town Council. The calculation is made on 29th November and not before. Therefore no material decisions on the budget and precept can be made until AFTER that date.

The tax base last year dropped. I have looked at the reasons for this as it was a substantial drop (which increases the amount that each household pays as there are less households to pay). This could be because more people are living alone, deaths etc, but although I do not have the exact reasons for our area, there were a number of houses built last year that would not have been occupied and therefore empty homes. As it is expected that these will now be utilised this may raise the figure (calculation). However, Polegate is having a number of more homes being built at present, therefore it is unclear until the date of the calculation exactly what this figure will be.

It is suggested by the clerk that the council make "in principle" decisions on the budget codes (what will be spent) and to formalise that decision based on the final calculation in January. (More detail should be known for the 9th December meeting).

h) The potential office move. I am currently working on the new figures and risk assessment for the potential office move and more detail will be presented at the coming full council meetings. The final decision for the budget will be made in January, when more financial data will be known.

NB BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY VARIABLES THAT COUNCIL STILL HAVE DECISIONS TO MAKE ON, THE BUDGET SHOWN IS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION, BUT IT IS NOT ADVISABLE TO MAKE ANY FORMAL RESOLUTION AT THIS STAGE.

THE CLERK HAS PRESENTED THESE FIGURES TO COUNCIL FOR A PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION BASED ON WHAT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE RUNNING OF THE COUNCIL. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS AND THOSE BUDGETS THAT COULD BE REDUCED, INCREASED OR LEFT THE SAME.