

<b>Committee, Group or Sub Group</b>	
FINANCE & STRATEGY GROUP	
<b>Meeting Date &amp; Venue</b>	
2.30pm Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2022, Virtual ZOOM Meeting	
<b>Report Author</b>	
Deborah Jenkins – Deputy Clerk & Finance Officer	
<b>Report</b>	
<p><b>Present:</b> Parish Councillors Colin Bowden (CB), Joan Buller (JB), Eric Hotson (EH), John Perry (JP) who was in the Chair, Richard Smith (RS). Deputy Clerk &amp; Finance Officer Deborah Jenkins (DJ), Clerk Alison Smith (AS).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Apologies:</b> Councillor Riordan. Councillor Lain-Rose was absent.</li> <li><b>Dispensations:</b> JP was given a dispensation to speak on matters relating to Jubilee Field and the Youth Club.</li> <li><b>Minutes of last meeting (01/12/2021):</b> it was NOTED that they had previously been issued to Full Council and published on the PC website.</li> <li><b>Draft Budget 2022-2023</b> – Review of draft budget:</li> </ol> <p>JP reviewed with members each individual budget heading comparing the current proposed draft budget with the original proposed budget for 2022-2023 and the projected expenditure for the current year. After much discussion Councillors agreed to make the following amendments to the draft budget:</p> <p><b>Projects:</b> <u>an increase of £10k to £32.5k</u> as suggested by AS who explained that Surrenden Field children’s play area would require replacement in the next 3-5 years, the Community Enhancement Group had plans to install adult gym equipment and to replace the existing pavilion. DJ stated that reserves to fund the projects would need to be built up over the next few years.</p> <p><b>Public Toilets:</b> <u>an increase of £3,950</u> for the re-opening and ongoing management of the disabled toilet at The Parade.</p> <p><b>Skatepark:</b> <u>an increase of £4,270 to £9,570</u> as suggested by AS to enable two events to take place following the successful event held in 2021 and to fund the painting of graffiti on the side panels of the ramps, in addition to a general increase in maintenance costs.</p> <p><b>Surrenden Field Maintenance:</b> <u>an increase of £8.5k to £13.5k</u> for the cost of the proposed grasscrete to be installed adjacent to the vehicle entrance onto the field and the installation of new CCTV cameras as previously agreed by Full Council.</p> <p><b>Village Update &amp; Website:</b> <u>a decrease of £6k to £5k</u> requested by the Communications Group for a digital display screen and a photographic competition. Councillors agreed that little information had been supplied in relation to the need and management of a digital display screen. It was unknown what the proposed expenditure was for in relation to a photo competition.</p> <p><b>Wimpey Field:</b> <u>a decrease of £4,030 to £6.5k.</u> AS explained that Greener Staplehurst Group had requested an increase in the budget to pay for a part time employee or contractors to manage the grounds. It was noted that until the updated Management Plan had been completed the amount of work required was unknown. JP proposed an increase of just under 2% on the projected expenditure for the current year.</p>	

**Youth Staff & Services:** an increase of £6k to £10k to cover the cost of a Youth Worker and management of the building.

**Professional Fees:** an increase of £7k to 10k AS confirmed the increased expenditure would be to engage a solicitor to restructure the relationship between the Parish Council, Jubilee Field Trustees and JFMC. In addition, EH stated that the Deed of Trust required amending and that work would be needed to comply with the Football Foundation requirements as it is likely the funding would need to be applied for by the Parish Council.

Councillors NOTED the Council Tax and Precept letter from MBC which stated that the current Band D charge would generate a precept of £210,991.29, an increase of £16,800.29 with no change in the parish element of the council tax for each resident. It was AGREED, following the adjustments to include the total increase of £29,690 as above, to submit to Full Council for approval at the meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 a proposed budget comprising gross expenditure of £279,514 and a precept requirement of £214,500.00, the difference being funded from anticipated income, S106 and CIL funds and reserves.

#### ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING:

5. **Youth Leader Project** – PR/JP update following Youth Club AGM: It was NOTED that the Youth Club AGM had taken place and that the Youth Club would be dissolved in its current format. The Chairman, Paul Kelly, is keen to relinquish ownership of the building as soon as possible.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

6. **CIL & S106** – Schedule of funds received/available; forward strategy on the use of funds: It was NOTED that S106 funds, relating to Hen & Duckhurst Farm application 14/502010, amounting to £14,380.00 had been received to fund the extension of the footpath at Surrenden Field.
7. **Contain Outbreak Management Fund** – proposed claim for expenditure items relating to Covid-19 from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 for finalising: Councillors agreed to submit an application requesting the sum of £1,330.90 as per the schedule prepared by DJ.
8. **Date of Next ZOOM Meeting** – Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 2.30pm, unless AS deems an earlier meeting in March is required.