

**BUDGET SCRUTINY PANEL  
3RD JANUARY 2024**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Charles)  
Councillors Monk and Seaton

Director Finance, Governance and Contracts  
Acting Head of Finance  
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGIES: None

Councillors Haynes, Popley and Westley attended this meeting  
virtually, see notes at end of minutes.

Note: The meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

14. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS, AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

15. DECLARATIONS - THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

16. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

17. PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT

Considered, a verbal update by the Director Finance, Governance and Contracts on the provisional financial settlement, as requested by the Panel at its last meeting, summarised as follows:

The settlement comprised two elements: the various grants and the retained Business Rates parameters. Re: the former, total amount was approximately £97k less than budgeted, manageable. Re: the latter some modelling work remained to be done on those numbers which required updating of software, but no significant issue anticipated. Position with calculation of core spending power also outlined.

Summary, key points of discussion:

- (i) The complex nature of the matter was noted.
- (ii) The various grants monies could be used for any Council expenditure.
- (iii) The final position with the settlement would be reflected in the final budget.

**RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

Reason

To acknowledge the Panel's consideration of the matter.

18. PANEL REPORT

Considered, the Panel's report for submission to Scrutiny Commission on 8th January 2024 (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Chair proposed wording setting out the conclusions of the Panel, for inclusion in its report. The Panel was content with those conclusions to include minor amendment suggested by the Director Finance, Governance and Contracts. At the meeting, the wording as amended was as follows:

"The Panel notes that due to the impact of higher interest rates on monies invested and the ability to use Business Rates Pool income in future years, the Medium Term Financial Strategy working balance is at £4.1 million not £2.8 million. This is a much stronger financial position than was previously expected.

Whilst many councils appear to be financially struggling, it is good to see that Charnwood will be able to budget with a limited use of reserves that have been built up over many years of shrewd fiscal management.

There are potential risks on the horizon, particularly within the housing benefits subsidy and we wait to see what changes can be made to assist the General Fund through additional income or cuts in expenditure".

This item also included brief discussion of matters relating to the Business Rates Pool.

**RESOLVED** that authority be delegated to the Chair to agree the Panel's final report, to include the above conclusions of the Panel and any minor amendments he considers are required.

Reason

To ensure the outcome of the Panel's scrutiny of the 2024/25 draft budgets is reported to the Scrutiny Commission in a timely manner.

NOTES:

1. Councillor Haynes, Popley and Westley attended this meeting virtually so were not taking decisions.
2. No reference may be made to these minutes at the next available Ordinary Council meeting unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
3. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Panel.