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Meeting	COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY
Time/Day/Date	6.30 pm on Tuesday, 24 January 2023
Location	Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville
Officer to contact	Democratic Services (01530 454512)

AGENDA

Item	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
Under the Code of Conduct members are reminded that in declaring interests you should make clear the nature of that interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest, registerable interest or other interest.	
3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING	
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2022 and 3 January 2023.	3 - 10
4. 2023/24 DRAFT BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX	
The Report of the Interim Head of Finance and S151 Officer.	11 - 16

Circulation:

Councillor D Everitt (Chairman)
Councillor M B Wyatt (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor E G C Allman
Councillor A J Bridgen
Councillor A S Black
Councillor J Geary
Councillor J Legrys
Councillor J Windram
Councillor M French

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MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor D Everitt (Chairman)

Councillors M B Wyatt, E G C Allman, J Geary, J Legrys, J Windram and M French

In Attendance: Councillors

Officers: Mrs A Crouch, Mrs C Hammond, Mr P Wheatley and Ms R Haynes

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor A Black.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Wyatt declared a registerable interest in all items, as the owner of two businesses in Coalville.

18. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor E Allman and

RESOLVED THAT

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

19. EVENTS UPDATE

The Head of Property and Regeneration presented the report and provided the meeting with an evaluation of the Events Programme which had concluded and confirmed that planning for the 2023 Events Programme and Christmas in Coalville Event would soon commence.

The cost of the events to the CSEWP was outlined, along with the objectives for these events. It was noted there had been evidence that these events were indeed proving successful in achieving the objectives set out.

The meeting was also informed that there had been evidence to indicate a correlation between the holding of events and increased footfall and also evidence to show that the council had successfully supported town centre retailers to begin to recover from the worst impacts of Covid-19.

A member asked that slide presentations also be provided in paper form or as an update sheet, officers agreed that this would be borne in mind for future meetings and agreed to circulate the slides following the meeting.

Officers provided information on Christmas in Coalville, which encompassed the Christmas lights and Christmas in Coalville event. The budget for these events was discussed and it was highlighted that the budget had faced a 40% budget reduction in real terms.

A member asked for clarification on figures for event expenditure and officers referred members to the appendices of the report, which showed the figures indicating how the calculation was arrived at. Members asked for a column to show total event expenditure in order to make it clearer to read at a glance and officers agreed that this would be incorporated in future reports.

The rationale for holding the Christmas in Coalville event in various locations was outlined along with an explanation of what the event comprised of. It was noted that members had recommended that the Council did not hold the firework finale and this had been carried by Cabinet. A member suggested that the space at Memorial Square could have been better utilised

The feedback which had been obtained from local residents who attended the Christmas in Coalville event was outlined, with lack of free parking being a common theme amongst the negative feedback. However it was suggested that this would not be something which the council could influence, as it does not own the majority of the car parking facilities in the town centre. A member suggested that a scheme be considered to offer traders to have a Christmas tree installed on their premises, at a fee, in order to promote a more decorative high street.

Officers proposed that members consider a review of what the "ideal" Christmas in Coalville would look like, in order that officers can provide information on costs and technical issues, so that members would be able to decide on what is practical and affordable.

In terms of planning for 2023, members were advised that officers wished to work closely with members in order to improve the event.

A member noted that the town appeared to be becoming increasingly busy and congratulated officers on this success, along with the Christmas switch on event which was very positive. However the lack of Christmas decorations in the Belvoir Centre was raised as an issue and it was suggested that the council should encourage the private owners of the shopping centre to increase their efforts. Officers advised that they had held early communications with shopping centre managers, however other factors may have influenced the approach which the shopping centre owners had taken.

A member advised that they had consulted local residents who had expressed disappointment at the lack of free parking, the lack of decorations in the precinct and the lights, which it was suggested had not consistently been working. It was suggested that more be invested in an improved stock of lights. With regards to the fireworks, it was suggested that members of the public had largely expressed satisfaction that this aspect of the event had been cancelled. Officers agreed that use of council car parks for free parking could be considered for future events and also agreed that there could be more Christmas lights and that this should be considered for forthcoming years. The problems of electrics within the street light columns and the clock tower were described to members, and it was noted that this would be a problem which the County Council would need to resolve as owners of the columns.

A member noted that the car parks had been full and that children seemed very happy with the event but that the lack of effort made by the private shopping centre owner had been very disappointing.

A member suggested that the opinions of members had not been taken into consideration when planning this event. Officers advised that there had not been a decision taken to change plans and suggested maybe there hadn't been sufficient discussion to ensure absolute clarity as to what Members wanted to see. A member informed the meeting that the lack of a main stage had been disappointing.

Officers advised that the snow globe had been introduced to bring a degree of “freshness” to the event and clarified that there had been no conscious decision by Officers to cancel the stage, but that officers would investigate and return to members with any findings relating to the decision to cancel the stage. The importance of more regular discussions entailing rigorous scrutiny of what the Christmas event would involve was highlighted. A member requested that the report which went to Cabinet regarding the Christmas event be provided to members of the Working Party, officers agreed to arrange this but wished to clarify that it was believed that only the decision to cancel the fireworks featured in this report.

The Democratic Services Team Manager confirmed that the minutes of Cabinet reported that the only decision by Cabinet pertained to the cancellation of the fireworks and not the cancellation of the stage.

A member suggested that more cohesive working between officers and members would lead to a bigger and better event in future. Officers highlighted that the level of decision making to which members wished to be involved may need to be clarified and suggested that better, more regular and more detailed communication about the Christmas event be adopted between officers and members.

A date was decided upon for a meeting of an events sub group and Paul Wheatley and Anna Crouch agreed to be available to attend this meeting in order to maintain continuity.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT

- 1) The progress update on 2022/23 events be noted.
- 2) The proposed Member engagement for 2023/24 events be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.50 pm

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MINUTES of a meeting of the COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 3 JANUARY 2023

Present: Councillor D Everitt (Chairman)

Councillors M B Wyatt, A S Black, J Geary, J Legrys and J Windram

Officers: Mrs A Crouch, Mrs C Hammond, Mr P Wheatley, Mr G Hammons, Ms R Haynes, Mr R Kyei and Ms S Thirkettle

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor E Allman.

The Chairman advised that Councillor M French had been held up and would try to join the meeting remotely if she was able to do so.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Wyatt declared a registerable interest in all items as the owner of two businesses in Coalville.

Councillor J Legrys declared a registerable interest in all items as a volunteer at and Director of the Hermitage FM project.

22. 2022/23 QTR 2 FINANCE UPDATE REPORT

The Finance Team Manager presented the report, outlining the expected deficit balances as at 31 March 2023 and highlighting the need to take action in order to ensure savings are made in 2022/23 of at least £17,000 in order that the Coalville Special Expenses budget and reserves would not be exceeded.

A member asked for clarification as to why there would be such a large budget deficit and officers responded that this had been raised in previous years and that the deficit position had been identified. However, it was noted that a savings plan had not been formulated when the budget was originally set and in order to maintain a balanced budget, the plan was for it to be addressed during this financial year. It was observed that annual expenditure had risen year on year but that income hadn't, additionally the district council grant had also decreased, therefore it had been a combination of factors which had led to the deficit position. It was highlighted that some of the need to make spending reductions would be on planned preventative maintenance. A member requested a more detailed breakdown of finances and officers agreed to provide this.

Members expressed a wish to see events broken down into more detail, for example instead of including Picnic in the Park under the umbrella of "Coalville Events" it was felt that it would be beneficial for members comprehension to see that this would still be a planned event under its own right.

A member thanked officers for the report and for the explanation around it but suggested that members could have received more notice of spiralling costs. Officers responded that ultimately the authority has a set amount of money which expenditure must be kept within and suggested that the current spending would send the budget into deficit, highlighting the need to attain a more balanced financial position.

Officers emphasised the importance of looking at ways to make savings in the present, as by acting later on a potential saving, this could run the risk of this saving not being

optimised, for example costs may have already been incurred which it would not be possible to claw back.

A member asserted that the working party did not have the responsibility of controlling the budget, however officers drew attention to the terms of reference in which it is stated that it is within the remit of the working party “to consider budget”.

A member suggested that there had been land within the special expenses area boundaries which had been rented out for less than the ‘going rate’, and suggested that by increasing rent, this would be a way to recoup some of the budget. Officers requested that the member provide specific details of the land in question so this could be investigated and followed up on.

Members asserted that they had not been provided with sufficient facts to come to a recommendation at this particular meeting and expressed reticence toward making decisions without being fully aware of the consequences of these decisions.

A member pointed out that there had been some positives, for example a £5,000 donation had been made to Coalville in Bloom and also money had been obtained in the form of grants from private companies.

The working group confirmed that whilst they would be satisfied to move and second the first recommendation, they wished to defer the decision on the second recommendation until further information had been provided.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor M Wyatt and

RESOLVED THAT

1. The 2022/23 Quarter 2 budget monitoring figures and forecasted outturn for 2022/23 be noted.
2. The decision to identify at least £17,000 of savings or deferral of planned maintenance to future financial years be deferred until the February meeting to allow officers time to provide the working party with a more detailed breakdown of the finances of the special expenses.

23. 2023/24 DRAFT BUDGET

The Finance Team Manager presented the report and provided the options available in order to produce a balanced budget, highlighting the need for members to choose the appropriate balance between increasing council tax, reducing costs and rephasing asset preventative maintenance.

A member suggested that the Council approach private companies in order to sell advertising space around the town, which could be a viable route to increase income.

A debate was had around the potential to increase council tax, however it was highlighted by officers that this did depend on what other special expense areas charged due to the statutory limits of the council tax referendum principles.

It was suggested that the finance sub group should meet and include all members in order to share the detailed breakdown information which officers had been asked to provide. It was felt that this would allow more potential and time to look at finance in much finer detail. It was proposed that this could take the form of a briefing over Teams, proceeded by a formal meeting.

Members proposed to defer making a recommendation, however it was highlighted that this would leave insufficient time to bring those recommendations to Cabinet. Officers suggested that a further, formal meeting would be required in order to agree upon recommendations before these would be presented to Cabinet on 31 January. It was suggested that the working party form part of the consultation process, which would allow the finance team time to circulate the extra information which the working party had requested, and still allow time to hold another formal meeting prior to 31 January Cabinet, before the working party recommend the budget to Council in February.

It was agreed that the finance team would hold a briefing for members in which they would be able to ask questions, followed by a formal meeting to discuss the report again. Officers agreed to collaborate in order to arrange a date for the additional meeting following the briefing.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor A Black and

RESOLVED THAT:

1. Any comments and feedback in the recommended level of council tax increase/savings to be achieved be deferred to allow officers time to provide the working party with a more detailed breakdown of the finances of the special expenses
2. Once members have received and been briefed on the more detailed breakdown, a further meeting of the working party be held to provide any comments and feedback to Cabinet at its meeting on 31 January 2023 as part of the budget consultation process.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40 pm

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY –
TUESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2023

Title of Report	2023/24 DRAFT BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX
Presented by	Anna Crouch Finance Team Manager & Deputy S151 Officer
Background Papers	Budget and Council Tax 2022/23 – Council 24 February 2022
Financial Implications	<p>It is a statutory requirement that the Council approve a balanced budget.</p> <p>Special expenses are part of the council's budget and therefore must also have a balanced budget. The report provides options to produce a balanced budget.</p> <p>Councillors will need to choose the appropriate balance between increasing council tax, reducing costs and rephasing asset preventative maintenance.</p> <p>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes</p>
Legal Implications	<p>There are no legal implications arising directly out of this report.</p> <p>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes</p>
Staffing and Corporate Implications	<p>None</p> <p>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes</p>
Purpose of Report	To present the 2023/24 draft budget to the Coalville Special Expenses precept.
Recommendations	FOR THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY TO PROVIDE COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT BUDGET (APPENDIX A) AND FEEDBACK ON THE RECOMMENDED LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX INCREASE/SAVINGS TO BE ACHIEVED TO BE CONSIDERED BY CABINET.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an opportunity for the Working Party to provide comments on the draft budget and precept increase before it is presented to Cabinet.

2. DRAFT BUDGET POSITION 2023/24-2027/28

- 2.1 As part of the budget process the Coalville Special Expenses precept needs to be reviewed each year to make sure there is sufficient funding to cover future expenditure requirements.
- 2.2 The budget includes a five year Planned and Preventative Maintenance (PPM) programme which should provide sufficient funding to cover future planned maintenance along with a programme for play equipment replacement. The PPM programme has been updated as part of the budget preparation.
- 2.3 The budget also allows for the phasing out of the Localisation of Council Tax Support Grant which commenced in 2021/22 for four years.
- 2.4 The Council Tax Base has been calculated for 2023/24 and the Band D equivalents for Coalville is 6,743 an increase of 65 from 2022/23.

Budget Requirement

- 2.5 To enable consultation to commence, a draft budget requirement covering the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 has been produced and is available at Appendix A. Table 1 below shows the change in budget requirement from the current year budget to 2023/24.

Table 1: Budget Comparison 2022/23 to 2023/24.

	2022/23 Budget	2023/24 Budget	Change
	£	£	£
Parks, Recreation Grounds & Open Spaces	396,380	449,840	53,460
Broomley's Cemetery & Closed Churchyard	74,660	23,980	-50,680
One Off Grants	2,000	2,000	0
Coalville in Bloom (Other Expenses)	5,000	5,000	0
Coalville Events	78,050	66,730	-11,320
External Grant Funding (play equipment)	0	0	0
SPECIAL EXPENSES (NET COST OF SERVICE)	556,090	547,550	-8,540
Service Management recharges/Admin Buildings	129,380	160,180	30,800
NET COST OF SERVICES AFTER RECHARGES	685,470	707,730	22,260

- 2.6 There are favourable variances in relation to an additional £10,500 burial income and a decrease in PPM of £49,000. The adverse variances relate to increases in expenditure in relation to Grounds Maintenance Recharges (£54,000), Utilities (£6,000), Christmas Decorations Contract (£7,000), Events (£5,000) and Service Management Recharges (£7,500).
- 2.7 There has been a change in accounting for 2023/24, salaries in relation to Events are no longer included within Coalville Events budget line, instead they will be recharged as Service Management. Table 2 below shows the budget impact of this change.

Table 2: Impact of Accounting Change

	2022/23 Budget £	Budget Changes £	Salaries Changes	2023/24 Budget £
Coalville Events	78,050	12,000	-23,320	66,730
Service Management	129,380	7,480	23,320	160,180

Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM)

- 2.8 The proposed PPM budget for 2023/24 is £95,510 and the planned maintenance is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3: 2023/24 Planned Preventative Maintenance

Coalville Park Public Conveniences - refurb disabled toilets	4,500
Cropston Drive Pavilion - renovation of changing rooms	4,000
Scotlands Recreation Ground Sports Pavilion - options appraisal & maintenance	9,000
Scotlands Recreation Ground Bowls Pavilion - replace bowls store doors	910
Coalville Closed Cemetery - tree works	1,050
Coalville Cemetery - tree works	1,800
Coalville Cemetery - path sealing	4,130
Ascot Drive play area - fencing works	1,540
Cropston Drive play area - replacement equipment	6,580
Greenhill BMX play area - replacement equipment	32,780
St Faiths Rd play area - replacement equipment	16,360
Staples Drive play area - fencing works	10,340
Sunningdale play area - fencing works	2,520
	95,510

Financing the Budget

- 2.9 The Council is required to set a balanced budget for each special expenses account. It is good practice to have a minimum level of balances, which is recommended at circa 10% of reoccurring expenditure
- 2.10 An options appraisal (Table 4 below) has been undertaken to finance the 2023/24 budget requirement, including covering the forecast brought forward deficit of £16,900. The options appraisal shows three options:
1. No increase in council tax precept
 2. Inflationary increase in council tax precept
 3. The level of council tax precept increase needed to balance the budget.
- All three options have been calculated for both nil reserves at the end of the year and the recommended 10%.

Table 4: Options Appraisal – Financing the Budget

Option	1		2		3	
	No Increase		Inflation		No Savings	
Balances	0%	10%	0%	10%	0%	10%
Council Tax Increase	0%	0%	10%	10%	42.7%	55.0%
Savings Needed	212,280	273,500	162,510	223,730	-	-
<u>Council Tax</u>						
2022/23	73.81	73.81	73.81	73.81	73.81	73.81
Increase	-	-	7.38	7.38	31.48	40.56
2023/24	73.81	73.81	81.19	81.19	105.29	114.37

2.11 The Referendum Principles in relation to Council Tax Increases allows the Council to increase Council Tax by the higher of £5 or 2.99% for 2023/24. The limit includes all special expenses account and not just Coalville. It should be noted that due to these referendum principles, implementing option 3 for all special expense accounts that require an increase is not viable as it would equate to an increase on average of over £10. Therefore, there will need to be a mix of council tax increases and savings for each special expense area to enable balanced budgets.

2.12 The working party are invited to comment on what level of council tax increase they would like to recommend to Cabinet and suggestions for how the savings can be achieved i.e., what budgets will be cut or where additional income can be generated. Table 5 shows the council tax increases in increments along with the savings required.

Table 5: Council Tax Increase/Savings Required

Council Tax			Savings	
			Balances	
Increase	Total		0%	10%
0%	-	73.81	212,000	274,000
5%	3.69	77.50	187,000	249,000
10%	7.75	81.56	162,000	224,000
15%	12.23	86.04	138,000	199,000
20%	17.21	91.02	112,000	174,000
25%	22.75	96.56	88,000	149,000
30%	28.97	102.78	63,000	124,000

3. BUDGET APPROVAL PROCESS

3.1 The Coalville Special Expenses Budget is approved as part of council's budgets and will follow the process detailed below:

- **Coalville Special Expenses Working Party – 3 January 2023**
 - considers budget and Council Tax for Coalville Special Expenses
- **Corporate Scrutiny Committee – 4 January 2023**
 - to consider the draft budget and proposals
- **Cabinet – 10 January 2023**
 - considers the draft budget and approves the consultation launch
- **Cabinet – 31 January 2023**
 - considers consultation responses and recommends final budget and council tax to Council
- **Council – 23 February 2023**
 - approves the revenue and capital budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Special Expenses and sets the Council Tax.

COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES BUDGET REQUIREMENT 2023/24-2027/28

SPECIAL EXPENSES	2022/23		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Budget	Forecast Outturn @ Q2	Budget	Indicative	Indicative	Indicative	Indicative
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
COALVILLE							
Parks, Recreation Grounds & Open Spaces	396,380	377,998	449,840	409,310	405,920	574,100	525,630
Broomley's Cemetery & Closed Churchyard	74,660	65,751	23,980	94,090	24,410	24,630	24,940
One Off Grants	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Coalville in Bloom (Other Expenses)	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Coalville Events	78,050	93,780	66,730	66,730	66,730	66,730	66,730
External Grant Funding (play equipment)	0	(26,355)	0	0	0	0	0
SPECIAL EXPENSES (NET COST OF SERVICE)	556,090	518,174	547,550	577,130	504,060	672,460	624,300
Service Management recharges/Admin Buildings	129,380	129,380	160,180	160,180	160,180	160,180	160,180
NET COST OF SERVICES AFTER RECHARGES	685,470	647,554	707,730	737,310	664,240	832,640	784,480