



Authority Meeting

Draft Minutes from 16th
December 2021

Version Control and Drafting

Version & Date	Comments
Version 0.1 21 st December 2021	1 st set of draft minutes from 16 th December 2021 circulated internally for additions/amendments.
Version 0.2 29 th December	MM review
Version 0.3 31 st December 2021	SC review
Version 0.3 4 th January 2022	Draft minutes (V0.3) from 16 th December 2021 finalised and circulated to all Members for initial feedback prior to publication.
Version 0.4 19 th January 2022	Feedback received from the Chair (6 th January 2022). Amendments applied. Draft Minutes 0.4 from 16 th December 2021 published on website.

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Minutes of the Authority Meeting

Held at Newton Abbot Racecourse on 16th December 2021 (start at 12.30 hrs)

Present:

Chair: Professor Mike Williams

Vice Chair: Dr Pamela Buchan

Cllrs:

Alistair Dewhirst (Devon County Council), Paul Crabb (Devon County Council), Stuart Hughes (Devon County Council), Phillip Twiss (Devon County Council), Ron Peart (Devon County Council), Terry Napper (Somerset County Council), Nicole Amil (Torbay Council), Nick Kelly (Plymouth City Council), Alan Preest (Gloucestershire County Council), Bridget Petty (North Somerset Council).

General Members/Statutory Members:

Rachel Irish (Marine Management Organisation), David Murphy, Felicity Sylvester, Simon Toms (Environment Agency), Wayne Thomas, David Morgan, Dave Saunders, Jon Dornom, Wayne Thomas, Andy Wray, Jay Boyle (Natural England), Tom Birbeck.

Officers:

Jessica Maunder (Devon County Council Finance), Peter Lapin (Devon County Council Finance), Simon Excell (Gloucestershire County Council), Simon Bunn (North Somerset County Council), Kat Deeney (Plymouth City Council).

D&S IFCA:

Mat Mander (Chief Officer - CO), Sarah Clark (Deputy Chief Officer - DCO),
Neil Townsend (Principal Policy Officer - PPO) Olga Pepper (Finance & Administration Manager – F&AM).

Public:

None.

Welcome

The Chair formally welcomed Authority Members to the Authority meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The Chair asked that all Members follow the Covid-19 protocol that had been introduced for the meeting. The Chair welcomed three new Members to the Authority – Jay Boyle from Natural England, Anthony McDowell (absent) and Cllr Stuart Hughes who had returned as a representative from Devon County Council. The Chair asked that all members briefly introduce themselves before moving onto the first Agenda Item.

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Action Items:

1. Apologies for Absence

The Chair asked F&AM Pepper to read out the list of apologies and absentees. The names called out were as follows:

Dr Emma Bean, James Marsden, Brian Glasson, Cllr Keith Burchill (South Gloucestershire Council), Jessica Bishop, Sarah Jackson, Natasha Bradshaw, Jim Masters, Karen Annis (on behalf of Torbay Harbour representative)

Anthony McDowell was recorded as absent.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair asked Members to declare any interests. Pamela Buchan informed Members that although she was now a General Member for the Authority, she was still a serving Councillor with Plymouth City Council. Cllr Dewhirst explained that although he was a representative from Devon County Council for the Authority, he was also a representative for Teignbridge District Council. The Chair recognised that all Councillors present at the meeting, had interests in specific areas of their respective Councils.

3. To Consider and Approve the Draft Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 16th September 2021

The draft minutes from 16th September 2021 were examined page by page and the Chair asked the Members to highlight any inaccuracies. David Morgan commented that the word “local” should be added to the reference to taxpayer’s money on page 7 and the Chair suggested a minor amendment on page 8, relating to the ability of seagrass to sequester carbon, as he recalled that seagrass can sequester 10 times more carbon than the same area of terrestrial forest, whereas the actual amount is two times. The Chair also highlighted a paragraph on page 9 and asked that additional words to be added to reflect that he had reserved the right to write to the Minister at Defra. The amendments to the draft minutes were noted by PPO Townsend. The Chair reminded Members that only Members who had attended the Authority meeting on 16th September 2021 were being asked to vote.

That the draft minutes of the Authority meeting held on 16th September 2021 (subject to the amendments) are a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Cllr Dewhirst Seconded: Pamela Buchan

In favour: All (that were present at the last meeting)

4. Matters Requiring Urgent Attention

The Chair briefly consulted with CO Mander, and it was established that there were no matters that required urgent attention.

5. Questions from the Public

The Chair briefly consulted with CO Mander, and it was established that there were no questions from the public that the Members needed to consider.

6. Appointment of Treasurer

Presentation:

CO Mander introduced the supporting Officers' paper and explained that D&S IFCA must appoint a Treasurer who will undertake the Section 151 (S.151) responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1972. It was highlighted that the responsibilities of the Treasurer, along with the Chief Officer, include setting the annual budget for D&S IFCA. CO Mander highlighted the other responsibilities as set out on the Officers' paper and informed Members that Mary Davis, who had been the Treasurer for D&S IFCA since it was created, had now retired.

CO Mander informed Members that Angie Sinclair, currently S.151 Officer, and recently appointed as Director of Finance (Designate) of Devon County Council, had indicated that she would be happy to stand as Treasurer for D&S IFCA and that this was reflected in the Officers' recommendation.

Comments & Questions:

There were no questions and Cllr Twiss said that he would propose the recommendation, as set out, as it offers a smooth transition.

Decision Making:

The Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority appoints Angie Sinclair as Treasurer until such time that it wishes to change the appointment.

Proposed: Cllr Twiss **Seconded:** Cllr Dewhirst

There were no amendments put forward and this became the substantive motion for a vote.

In favour: All (24)

The Chair asked that it be recorded in the minutes that all Authority members wished to thank Angie Sinclair for taking up the role of Treasurer and to thank Mary Davis for her support until her retirement.

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7. Review of the Authority's Financial Probity and Financial and Administrative Regulations

Presentation:

CO Mander introduced the audit report on D&S IFCA's Statement of Accounts and Financial Controls for 2020/21. Although the Audit found that the financial and administrative systems that D&S IFCA has in place are adequate, CO Mander informed Members that the Audit recommended a change to the wording in D&S IFCA's Financial & Administrative Regulations as set out in the Officers' paper.

Comments & Questions:

Pamela Buchan enquired about the assessment of financial risks and CO Mander responded by explaining that this formed part of the Audit, which was an inclusive process involving both himself and D&S IFCA's Finance & Administration Manager. With no other questions, the Chair highlighted the recommended change in wording as set out in the Officers' paper and Cllr Petty said that she would propose it as a motion.

Decision Making:

That the current wording of Section 13 (Investments) of the D&S IFCA's Financial and Administrative Regulations

'Treasury deposit valued of £500,000 can be placed in a three-month deposit'

Changes to

'Treasury deposit valued to a minimum of £500,000 can be placed in a three-month deposit.'

Proposed: Cllr Petty **Seconded:** Pamela Buchan

There were no amendments put forward and this became the substantive motion for a vote.

In favour: All (24)

8. To consider and approve the draft minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Sub Committee meeting held on 7th December 2020

Presentation:

CO Mander explained that there was not an accompanying Officers' paper for this agenda item; however, the draft minutes from the Finance and General Purposes Sub Committee (F&GPSC) meeting formed part of the papers for this meeting. CO Mander explained that the approval of these draft minutes would have been a decision for the F&GPSC at their last meeting in November, however the meeting had not been quorate. To complete the process, it was now a task for the Full Authority and therefore those Members who were present at the F&GPSC meeting in December 2020 could vote on their accuracy.

Comments & Questions:

The Chair, who had been present at the December F&GPSC meeting, asked that they be examined page by page. There were no questions or amendments highlighted by Members.

Decision Making:

That the draft minutes from the Finance and General Purposes Sub Committee meeting held on 7th December 2020 are a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Cllr Hughes **Seconded:** Rachel Irish

In favour: 3
Against 0
Abstain 21

9. To consider and approve the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme for FY 2022/23

Presentation:

The Chair explained that this topic included two separate papers, the first (9a) produced by CO Mander and the second produced jointly by the Treasurer and CO Mander and the Chair thanked Officers and the Devon County Council finance team for the work involved in setting out the information for discussion. The Chair informed all Members that it was essential that the debate and proceedings were conducted in accordance with the Authority's Standing Orders and therefore a process map had been circulated to assist Members with the protocol. The Chair informed Members that there would be the opportunity for an amendment to be put forward as per the Standing Orders and that this would be undertaken in due course. The Chair invited CO Mander to present the first Officers' paper (9a) to Members.

CO Mander informed Members that the Chair had requested that the names of Members voting (when a vote is taken) on the budget setting to be recorded in the Minutes. CO Mander conducted a PowerPoint presentation to highlight the key aspects of the Officers' paper (9a) and the recommendation as set out in paper (9b). The headlines of the presentation included the following:

- The recommended Revenue Budget would increase the base level by 3% to £762,200 and proposed the use of £65,500 from General Reserves.
- The recommended increase in the levy on Local Authorities would mean that 5 Local Authorities would still receive a combined surplus of £47,059 of New Burdens Funding from Defra.
- The recommended Revenue Budget of £827,700 would represent the lowest settlement across the nine mainland IFCAs.
- The proposed use of Reserves would be used to employ an additional 1.28 FTE staff and would mean that D&S IFCA employs the second lowest number of FTE staff across the nine mainland IFCAs.

CO Mander clarified that the increase in the Revenue Budget would allow for the employment of two additional full-time Enforcement Officers and a full time Marine Development Officer. CO Mander highlighted that frequent resignations of staff had accounted for large portions of underspends in many past annual budgets, and this is once again the case as evidenced by the recent resignations of both the Permitting Officer and the Fisheries Research and Management Plan Officer. The latter had been financed via the use of General Reserves and the savings from salary costs for the vacant position would be boosted by additional use of General Reserves in order that D&S IFCA could employ three new members of staff. CO Mander clarified that the new positions would be permanent posts, rather than fixed term positions, and the future implications for annual budget setting had been identified as a volatile risk in paper 9b.

CO Mander emphasised that a total Revenue Budget of £827,700 would still not provide the resources that D&S IFCA needs to fully meet its Statutory Duties. CO Mander explained that Defra had been informed about the Authority's weakness when measured against its Statutory Duties and CO Mander estimated that current New Burdens Funding (from Defra) equates to approximately 2% of funding directed towards new burdens work. CO Mander expanded on key points relating to increasing costs as follows:

- DCC finance team have identified the forecast costs associated with staff and inflation. Staff costs will reflect the biggest pressure on the Revenue Budget in the next five years.
- These forecast costs alone would represent a period of unprecedented increase in the Revenue Budget for D&S IFCA. (FY 2010/11 – 2021/22 Revenue Budget increased by only £3,500 [£736,500 - £740,000])

- Agreed Job Evaluation of current staff. – The presumption made by Officers in the figures presented¹ is that D&S IFCA officers would at least attain a comparable salary to their colleagues in other IFCAs.
- Comprehensive restructuring of organisation, staff and operational resources estimated at between £270,000 and £370,000

CO Mander highlighted the differences in IFCAs' budgets throughout the UK and wanted members to realise that Eastern IFCA, a smaller IFCA by size of District (than D&S IFCA), operates on a Revenue Budget for 2021-22 that is over twice as much as the recommended D&S IFCA Revenue Budget for 2022/23. CO Mander emphasised that a total Revenue Budget exceeding £1,000,000 would be required for D&S IFCA to function correctly and that a budget of £827,700 was being recommended based on two assumptions. Firstly, it was thought to be the best that could be achieved at this time and secondly it provides some breathing space to allow the Local Authorities and Defra to engage with each other in 2022 to find a longer-term solution to the funding difficulties faced by D&S IFCA.

The Chair invited Peter Lappin to expand in relation to paper (9b). Peter Lappin highlighted that although the base levy would represent an increase in 3%, the proposed total Annual Revenue Budget of £827,700 equates to a 12% increase. Peter Lappin confirmed that risks associated with the employment of permanent staff had been accounted for during discussions and preparation of paper (9b) and that Devon County Council were supportive of the recommendation.

Comments & Questions (General Debate – 1)

As per the Standing Orders, the Chair opened debate on the recommendation of a £827,700 Revenue Budget for FY 2022-23. Cllr Dewhirst commented that all Members have seen and understood the content of the Officers' papers and, although it will not resolve the on-going funding difficulties, he would like to propose this amount as a motion for a vote. The Chair replied and said this was noted; however, the Chair wanted all Members to have the opportunity to contribute to discussions in a general debate before a voting process began. Simon Excell clarified that Cllr Preest would be putting forward an amendment to the Revenue Budget on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council, but before this he wanted to seek some clarity regarding paper (9b) and the Table 3 (Comparison of Levy with New Burdens Funding). Simon Excell informed Members that the table is suggestive that New Burdens Funding support by Defra will be paid to Local Authority's; however, there is no guarantee that this is the case. Furthermore, this fact should have been made clearer in the paper. CO Mander apologised if this fact was unclear to Members as he had given his assurance to Simon Excell that it would be clearly noted in the paper. CO Mander confirmed that as of 16th December 2021, the New Burdens settlement for 2022/23 had not been announced and was dependent on the outcome of the Government Spending Review. CO Mander explained that all IFCAs are seeking answers from Defra and there is some uncertainty; however, what is clear is that all IFCAs depend on New Burdens Funding for a portion of their income and without it they will not be able to operate effectively. CO Mander highlighted that Defra has increased future expectations for IFCAs, including the management of Highly Protected Marine Areas and the development (and actions from) Fisheries Management Plans. These national initiatives are beyond many IFCAs, including D&S IFCA, at this time due to inadequate funding and it is therefore an expectation, rather than a certainty, that at least the same amount of New Burdens Funding will be provided to the Local Authorities as set out in the table in paper (9b). The Chair added that the Association of IFCAs

¹ As presented at the Authority meeting 16th July 2021 (Agenda Item 12)

(AIFCA) has submitted a funding bid to increase New Burdens Funding from the current £3.3M to £6 Million; however, it ultimately rests with Defra.

Cllr Twiss recognised the point made by Simon Excell and commented that all Members would now be aware of the uncertainty relating to New Burdens Funding. Regarding the setting of the Revenue Budget, Cllr Twiss said that having considered the information presented, he would second the proposal offered by Cllr Dewhirst that the Revenue budget is set at £827,700 for 2022-23. The Chair thanked Cllr Twiss and said his offer to second the proposal was noted and then encouraged further general debate.

Cllr Kelly sought some clarity regarding the Standing Orders now that the recommended Revenue Budget had been proposed and seconded. CO Mander clarified that the Standing Orders allow for further discussion until the Chair ends the general debate. Cllr Kelly informed Members that Plymouth City Council is supportive of the increased budget being recommended. Cllr Kelly said that from Plymouth City Council's perspective, the IFCA is integral to many of their own objectives, that include improved conservation, improved fisheries management and to address the climate emergency. Cllr Kelly explained that much of the Southwest relies on a sustainable and well managed fishing industry, with other industries such as tourism able to benefit. It was the view of Cllr Kelly that the increased budget, as set out, is hardly exorbitant and provides D&S IFCA with an opportunity to deliver more of its essential and valued work. Focussing on New Burdens payments, Cllr Kelly informed Members that helping to fund D&S IFCA is a direct cost to Plymouth City Council, and their local taxpayers, as there is no New Burdens support provided by Defra to Plymouth City Council to offset this cost. Cllr Kelly added that it seems irregular that all of the New Burdens Funding currently being provided by Defra to other funding Authorities does not actually reach D&S IFCA, an organisation that is great value for money and most in need of the financial support.

Cllr Petty enquired if D&S IFCA had considered any other alternatives for funding such as fees and charges and asked if the post of Fisheries Research and Management Plan (FRMP) Officer would be filled in the future. CO Mander responded and explained that national developments may inform the most suitable time and revenue stream to employ another FRMP Officer and the AIFCA have already identified that all IFCAs will most likely need an Officer of this kind in the future. In the short term, the extra revenue as proposed would be used to employ the Officers as identified in the Officers' paper as this would meet more immediate needs for the organisation. The Chair commented that D&S IFCA's options for revenue are limited and payments for fishing permits are only permitted to cover administration costs. They cannot be used to generate a general profit. CO Mander highlighted that to gain additional revenue, such as project-based money, it takes time and potentially a dedicated Officer to pursue those types of opportunities and that this is something that is currently beyond the capacity of D&S IFCA with its small number of staff.

Felicity Sylvester commented that the Severn based Local Authorities are paying a lot of money to support D&S IFCA as a whole; however, the main fishing activity within the District occurs on the south coast of Devon. As this is the case, Felicity Sylvester questioned why the percentages for levy contributions are set as they are. As a second point, Felicity Sylvester questioned why D&S IFCA had closed its Somerset Office as it was now out of touch with stakeholders in the more northern parts of the District. Felicity Sylvester said that she would not support an increase to the Revenue Budget.

The Chair responded to Felicity Sylvester and clarified that the percentages for levy contributions are set out in the 2010 Order and devised by Defra, who are unable to explain the rationale for the setting of those percentages. These percentages are part of the on-going discussions with Defra. It was the view of the Chair that a change in the Order was the only longer-term solution to the funding issues. CO Mander responded to Felicity Sylvester's question regarding the closure of the Somerset Office and explained that this was due to an insufficient budget to keep it open and operational.

Cllr Napper commented that he has sympathy for D&S IFCA's position; however, it was his view that this is a Defra issue to resolve as the percentages of levy contributions make no sense. Cllr Napper confirmed that he would not be supporting an increase in D&S IFCA's Revenue Budget.

Having provided the opportunity for all Members to speak, the Chair ended the general debate and formal proceedings began.

Recommendation (A Revenue Budget of £827,700)

The Chair highlighted that Cllr Dewhurst had proposed a Revenue Budget of £827,700 which was supported (seconded) by Cllr Twiss. Before a vote was taken, the Chair informed Members that Gloucestershire County Council had submitted an amendment in writing prior to the meeting in accordance with the Standing Orders and that this amendment (with supporting information) had been circulated to all Members. The Chair invited Cllr Preest to offer his amendment.

Amendment from Gloucestershire County Council

Cllr Preest confirmed that Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) wished to propose a Revenue Budget of £740,000 and that if the amendment fails, would (as confirmed in correspondence) consider a motion to veto a Revenue Budget of £827,700. The Chair asked if another Member would support the amendment and Cllr Terry Napper agreed. The Chair then invited Cllr Preest to address all Members and expand on the amendment. Cllr Preest read through a pre-prepared statement (transcribed) as follows.

- GCC notes the IFCA's Chief Officer's recommendation to approve an increase in the annual budget from £740,000 (2021/22) to £827,700 (2022/23).
- This represents a proposed increase of c. 12%.
- GCC notes that the employees' budget is proposed to increase from £536,600 (2021/22) to £644,000 (2022/23).
- This represents a proposed increase of c. 20%.
- GCC notes the Chief Officer's intention to recruit two new permanent Enforcement Officers and the creation of a new permanent post – a Marine Development Officer.
- GCC notes that £65,500 of the Authority's reserves are proposed to be used as a 'contingency' to reduce the 2022/23 budget to be paid by the funding local authorities to £762,200.
- GCC notes that the IFCA has underspent in 8 of the 10 f/years it has existed (2011/12-2020/21).
- GCC notes that the latest budget monitoring report (month 6) shows another forecast underspend in 2021/22.
- GCC notes that the Chief Officer's report and presentation to the September 2021 Full Authority meeting stated that the IFCA's annual budget is forecast to increase every f/year for the next 5 f/years.
- The percentage contribution (of the agreed annual budget) each funding local authority has to pay the IFCA is set in primary legislation.
- GCC is the third highest percentage contributor to the IFCA (set at 14.47%).
- Discussions between the IFCA's Chair and Chief Officer with DEFRA have revealed that they have no current intentions to review the percentage contributions of funding local authorities that are set out in the D&S Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010.
- There is no guarantee that New Burdens Funding (NBF) will continue to be paid 2022/23 onwards.
- GCC does not agree that a c. 12% increase in the IFCA's budget is acceptable at a time of continued significant pressures on local authorities' budgets – enhanced by the severe impacts of the ongoing CV-19 pandemic.

- GCC does not agree that the IFCA should be increasing its employees' budget by c. 20%, which in no way reflects the local authorities' situations.
- GCC does not agree with the use of reserves as set out in the Chief Officer's recommendations. The 'D&SIFCA FY 2022/23 Revenue Budget Summary Report' (paper 9a of the December 2021 Full Authority papers) states that the three additional employees are proposed to be permanent employees – yet the IFCA's proposed financial solution (of using reserves) can only be temporary. Were this use of reserves to be allowed in this way in the future, the Authority would be faced with a situation where the annual budget goes up year after year after year and the reserves would be continuously lowered to a level which the IFCA's own adopted reserves policy does not allow (i.e. no lower than 25% of the annual budget). This would then result in the funding local authorities being faced with a significantly increased budget and the IFCA would not be able to 'sugar the pill' by proposing the use of reserves. This would be at a time where there is no guarantee of a penny of NBF being received in the future. The increased statutory payments of the funding local authorities would still have to be paid.
- GCC, like many local authorities across the country, has had to make tough decisions about staffing levels and budgets over recent years. Demand-led services, such as care for older and vulnerable adults and children in care continues to create severe budgetary issues.
- GCC's planning enforcement 'team', for instance, has now been reduced to one officer for the whole of Gloucestershire. I'm sure you can appreciate the frustration, therefore, of the IFCA's intention to bolster its enforcement team by a third – a luxury GCC does not have, due to ongoing budgetary pressures. We have been forced, like many other local authorities, to 'cut our cloth' to fit the limited resources we have – even for our statutory functions. Just because a function is statutory, it doesn't necessarily mean that significantly enhanced resources should be attributed to it.
- Two more permanent enforcement officers will most likely result in more enforcement cases – some of which will be heard in Court. As the Chief Officer has stated at previous Full Authority meetings, the IFCA 'loses' money in a Court case – even if the IFCA 'wins'. This will result in additional legal fees in future f/years – on top of the permanent additional staff costs.
- Overall, it is considered fair and reasonable, given the severe financial pressures currently placed on GCC (and other local authorities) that a 'standstill' budget of £740,000 (2022/23) is proposed to the Full Authority meeting via a motion by GCC.

Cllr Preest informed Members that all of the key points were of concern to Gloucestershire County Council; however, the most significant were that the levy percentage was not fair, the employment of additional permanent staff for D&S IFCA is disproportionate as compared to Gloucestershire County Council's complement of Enforcement type Officers for Land Use Planning and that these permanent roles for D&S IFCA increase risks for potential budget increases in future years. To end the presentation, Cllr Preest raised concern that increased enforcement capability could result in increased detection of non-compliance, increased court action and associated legal costs, that would further increase D&S IFCA's budgetary requirements. Cllr Napper, as seconder to the amendment, had nothing to add and the Chair then invited all Members to debate the amendment.

Debate on Amendment

Cllr Kelly said that he recognised the division amongst Members and whilst he understood the rationale for some of the points made in terms of percentage levy, he could not support the amendment. Cllr Kelly highlighted that, unlike Plymouth City Council, Gloucestershire County Council receives a considerable amount of Defra money to pass on to D&S IFCA. Cllr Kelly commented that Gloucestershire County Council has a £12,000 surplus that is effectively being used to support other services provided by the Council and

that the same is true for Somerset County Council, who do not pass on a similar amount. Cllr Kelly remarked that how can any funding Authority argue that they cannot support an increased revenue budget for D&S IFCA when money being provided by Defra is not being passed on in full. It was the view of Cllr Kelly that it cannot have been the expectation of Defra to have Government money (New Burdens Funding) being used for other purposes rather than supporting D&S IFCA to meet its Statutory Duties and that this on-going situation is damaging to the argument and attempts to resolve the longer-term funding difficulties. Commenting on increased enforcement capability and potential increases in legal fees, Cllr Kelly said he welcomed improved detection of fisheries offences as this is a sign that D&S IFCA is doing its job effectively. Higher levels of enforcement, deterrent or investigation should be welcomed by all Members and not to support doing the job effectively would be the wrong message for many stakeholders and Defra. Cllr Kelly commented that multiple Officers' papers have highlighted how stretched the current staff are, and to support a stand still revenue budget would severely hamper the running of an organisation that is held in high regard. Cllr Kelly ended his contribution by stating that the level of funding increase being recommended at £827,700 is insignificant when balanced against total expenditure of any of the funding Authorities.

Simon Excell clarified that as it stands, although Gloucestershire County Council does have a surplus of New Burdens Funding that it receives from central government, the money is not ring fenced and does not legally have to be passed on to D&S IFCA.

Pamela Buchan commented that supporting a stand still Revenue Budget at a time of high inflation would be supporting a real term cut in funding for an organisation, already struggling. Pamela Buchan added that she was completely supportive of the views offered by Cllr Kelly and when putting aside the complications of two coastlines and logistical difficulties, D&S IFCA is an important vehicle to deliver on multiple issues that impact everyone in every area of the District. Pamela Buchan said that she was concerned that additional recruitment is considered by some Members to be a "financial liability", rather than an opportunity for D&S IFCA to potentially do its job in a better way. In response to Simon Excell's point regarding New Burdens Funding not being ring fenced, Pamela Buchan agreed that it may not be legally wrong not to pass it all on to D&S IFCA, but in her view it is morally wrong.

Cllr Dewhirst echoed the support offered by Pamela Buchan to the points made by Cllr Kelly and not passing on a source of revenue from Defra to D&S IFCA in the form of New Burdens Funding was not something that he could support. Cllr Dewhirst added that those Local Authorities that have a surplus should feel that they have a moral obligation to allocate the money appropriately. Cllr Dewhirst said that the original recommendation of a Revenue Budget of £827,700 was clearly not the answer to all D&S IFCA difficulties, but, as stated by CO Mander, it does at least provide some increased stability whilst discussions with Defra continue. For these reasons, Cllr Dewhirst said he would not support the amendment of a £740,000 Revenue Budget.

Cllr Amil confirmed that all Local Authorities face financial pressures; however as highlighted by Cllr Kelly, the increase being recommended to D&S IFCA's Revenue Budget is relatively small and that Torbay Council would support it, rather than the amendment offered by Gloucestershire County Council.

Peter Lappin added some information and explained that whilst £65,000 from General Reserves formed part of the Revenue Budget, this was clearly not a long-term solution. Peter Lappin wanted all Members to fully understand that this action could not be repeated on a regular basis but gives D&S IFCA time to and identify other revenue streams and for Defra to resolve the funding issues.

Cllr Napper commented that Somerset County Council is supportive of the work of D&S IFCA and its staff; however, it faces financial difficulties of its own.

The Chair offered the right of reply to Cllr Preest who said that the views presented to underpin the amendment were those of Gloucestershire County Council and may or may not be his personal views.

Decision Making 1 (The amendment):

As per the Standing Orders, the Chair asked all Members to vote on the amendment offered by Gloucestershire County Council.

That the Revenue Budget for D&S IFCA for FY 2022-23 is set at £740,000., rather than £827,700.

Proposed: Cllr Preest **Seconded:** Cllr Napper
In favour: 4 – Cllr Preest, Cllr Napper, Cllr Petty, Felicity Sylvester
Abstain 1 – Jay Boyle (NE)
Against 19 – All other members present at the meeting

The Chair explained that as the amendment was not carried, the original motion of a Revenue Budget of £827,700 as set out in the Officers' papers stands.

Decision Making 2 (The Original Motion of £827,700):

That the Revenue Budget for D&S IFCA for FY2022-23 is £827,700.

Proposed: Cllr Dewhirst **Seconded:** Cllr Twiss
In favour: 20 – All other members present at the meeting (other than below)
Against 4 – Cllr Preest, Cllr Napper, Cllr Petty, Felicity Sylvester
Abstain 0

The Chair thanked all Members for taking the time to call out their names during the voting process. Cllr Preest informed all Members that Gloucestershire County Council would not proceed with a motion to veto the agreed budget of £827,700.

10. To note the Budget Monitoring 2021/22 Report – Month 6 Presentation:

The Chair asked Jessica Maunder (Devon County Council Finance) to introduce this agenda item. Jessica Maunder highlighted the key information including the overall underspend on the Revenue Budget that was mainly due to savings in salary costs (resignation and maternity leave). Jessica Maunder also highlighted savings made as a result of Covid-19 (Transport and meetings). Members were guided through the tables including the variances on page 2, before Jessica Maunder said that she would be happy to answer any questions.

Comments & Questions:

There were no comments or questions, and the report was taken as read. The Chair thanked Jessica Maunder and the whole Devon County Council Finance team for their contribution to D&S IFCA's financial work.

Information Items:

11. Byelaw Development Update Report

Presentation:

CO Mander explained that this was an information item only; however, Members could highlight any part of the Officers' paper which would then become a future agenda item. There were no comments, and it was taken as read.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair informed Members that the next Authority meeting would be held on 17th March 2022.

Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked everyone in attendance, especially as it had been extremely cold due to Covid-19 safety ventilation measures. The Chair reminded all Members that 19th December 2021 marks the 40th anniversary of the Solomon Browne RNLI lifeboat tragedy and at 20.00 hrs on this date, Members may wish to pause and remember.

End