

D&SIFCA Finance Working Group Meeting.

Held virtually on 15/11/2022.

Meeting notes

Meeting was attended by:

Cllr Hughes (Devon County Council), Stephen Dury (Somerset Council), Mike Williams (General Member), Simon Bunn (North Somerset Council), Brian Glasson (South Gloucestershire Council), Cllr Amil (Torbay Council), Cllr Twiss (Devon County Council), Cllr Preest (Gloucestershire County Council), Simon Excel (Gloucester County Council), Cllr Dewhirst (Devon County Council), Amy Booth, Jess Maunder and Peter Lappin (Devon County Council Finance Team), D&SIFCA's Officers – CO Mander, DCO Clark and Olga Pepper (Finance and Admin)

Due to the uncertainties surrounding the current financial situation nationwide, rather than offering officer papers with specific budget related options, the meeting was utilised by the D&SIFCA's Officers to update the members of the Finance Working Group upon the considerations regarding the 2023/24 budget. The Officers sought the Group's thoughts and advice in reference to potentially rescheduling the December's Main Authority Meeting in order to be able to have more clarity from the Local Authorities in the subject of their own budget settings early in 2023.

Councillors and Officers present shared concerns regarding the current financial situation in respective Councils (great difficulties with meeting the statutory duties due to financial pressures) and confirmed that the outcome of the D&SIFCA's budget setting meeting is likely to be – no increase in the budget (a standstill budget).

Participants would have liked to see detailed papers with options set out of what the standstill budget would mean for the D&SIFCA.

Participants requested a paper providing information about not just the next tax years, but year 24/25 should the financial difficulties continue.

Participants felt that any updates following the respective Councils' budgets settings in January 2023 are not likely to bring any changes in the direction of the current decision making in reference to D&SIFCA, meaning a standstill budget.

CO Mander updated on the discussions with Defra in respect to funding – an urgent meeting is needed to inform the decisions made in the upcoming Main Authority Meeting.

CO Mander will work with the Devon County Council Finance Team to deliver the papers as discussed and D&SIFCA's offices will inform the members about the dates of any upcoming Finance Working Group meetings.