**Head of Finance – Section 151 Comments on Independent Group Alternative Budget for 2024-25 to 2027/28**

**Date 15-02-24**

I have reviewed the budget submitted by the Independent Group as an alternative to the Labour Administrations budget and it is arithmetically correct. Points worthy of note are detailed below.

**The General Fund Revenue**

The budget allows for additional transfer to reserves of £439k over the 4 year period. The additional income/savings is further analysed as follows :

**Savings**

* Savings in the cost of a number of services provided by ODS such as street cleansing and parks maintenance (£79k) and closure of toilets (£83k) are proposed which would be in addition to the savings from ODS services already in the budget from 1-4-2025.

**Costs**

* **Removal of bulky waste** charge for one year –cost of £105k. The rationale is that there is a causal link between fly tipping and bulky waste although
* Officers are not convinced that such link exists, with increases in fly tipping incidences probably coming from increased recording
* Recent changes in legislation allows householders to take DIY waste to Household waste sites free of charge, hence lessening the need to fly tip
* **Reducing the Council tax** increase down from 2.99% to 1.99%. Within the budget consultation there was more support for increasing council tax by the maximum permissible rate of 2.99% with 52% in support compared to 33% of respondents that did not support.

**Capital Budget -** There are no proposed changes to the Administrations Capital Budget

**The HRA** – There are no proposed changes to the Administrations HRA Budget

**Nigel Kennedy Head of Financial Services (Section 151 Officer)**