

**Report of the RSN Executive to the RSN AGM 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023**  
**2023/2024 Budget Report**  
**2024/2025 Estimates**  
**Membership Subscriptions 2024/2025**

**1.0 BUDGET REPORT 2022/23 AND ESTIMATES FOR 2023/24**

1.1 This report is a budget document which sets out:

- Actual Income and Expenditure as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023
- 2023/24 Original Budget
- Variations from the Original Budget
- 2023/24 Revised Budget
- 2024/25 Draft Estimates/Recommended Budget

[Download the budget report here](#)

- 1.2 It is perhaps worth noting that estimated non-staffing expenditure has been reduced substantially over the last few years as a result of staff now working from home (removing office costs) and meetings, events, seminars, and the annual conference being carried out remotely substantially reducing travelling and associated costs.
- 1.3 2023/24 is an 'unusual' year for staffing costs with Kerry Booth taking over as Chief Executive on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023. and the former Chief Executive, Graham Biggs, being retained in a Rural Policy Support role. The transition to a new Chief Executive had been planned and budgeted for over the past few years.
- 1.4 Members will note that the Original Budget for 2023/24 as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 showed an estimated Excess of Expenditure over Income (and therefore a use of balances) of £74,635.00 but in the revised estimates this has been reduced by over £40,000. This has been mainly due to the budgeted sum for staffing costs having not been fully utilised. The Executive feel it is premature to decide if the current staffing establishment is of the right composition going forward. That will be kept under review.
- 1.5 It is likely that by the end of the year expenditure will be reduced yet further as there are provisions included that probably will not be needed in 2023/24. If they are not needed in 2023/24, they may need to be carried forward into 2024/25.
- 1.6 Depending on the timing of the General Election 2024/25 (and 2025/26) are likely to be exceptionally busy years on the rural policy and fair funding fronts, in particular. Additional activity can, where necessary, be met from the overall balances which have been deliberately established.
- 1.7 4% p. a. has been added each year as a provision for inflation on expenditure items.

## **2.0 MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS 2024/25**

- 2.1. For 2024/25 the Executive feels it must recommend similar increases to those which applied in 2023/24. This is because of (1) there is reduced membership from SPARSE/Assembly subscriptions due to changes to Unitary status in Somerset, North Yorkshire, and Cumbria on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024. Three of the four new unitary councils have become members and discussions with the fourth are on-going – nevertheless there is an income loss overall as previous District members in those areas were lost. (2) inflation on non-staffing costs generally and (3) the 2023/24 pay award to Local Government employees for 2023/24. All RSN employees have contracts of employment which mean increases in line with the average increases for Local Government employees. The employers offer equates to a 5.23% increase overall for RSN. 4% was budgeted for in respect of 2023/24
- 2.3 The Executive believes that the 2024/25 recommended budget is that necessary for the RSN to continue to offer and continue to develop, the extensive range of services to and on behalf of its membership.
- 2.4 The Executive therefore recommends that SPARSE and Rural Assembly membership fees should increase by 5%. for 2024/25.
- 2.5 The Executive further recommends that for all Rural Services Partnership Groups membership fees should increase for 2024/25 by 3%. (it was limited to 2% for 2023/24 and for several years prior to that).

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 3.1 That the Revised 2023/24 budget report be noted.**
- 3.2 That SPARSE and Rural Assembly membership fees both be increased by 5% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.**
- 3.3 That the fees for all other membership Groups be increased by 3% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.**
- 3.4 That, assuming recommendations 3.1 - 3.3 above are accepted, the Draft Estimates/Budget for 2024/25 be approved.**
- 3.5 That in accordance with current practice the RSN Executive be authorised to approve in year variations to the Budgets.**

Roger Phillips  
RSN Chair

Kerry Booth  
Chief Executive

November 2023