

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 12th DECEMBER 2018** at 12.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor M.P. Bonfield (Mayor) – Chairman.

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor C. Finch
Councillor G. Green
Councillor T. Morris
Councillor M. Whitwam

Also in attendance:-

Councillor A. Lejeune
Councillor W. Trite
Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk
Miss A. Spencer – Finance Manager
Mr G. Brookes – Operations Manager
Mr C. Milmer – Visitor Services Manager

In addition to Members of the Council and officers, one member of the public attended the Meeting.

Public Participation Time

The following matters were raised during Public Participation Time:-

- Reducing the Precept for 2019/20
- Mayoral chain refurbishment
- Projected income from car parking in 2019/20
- Christmas lights and the use of the earmarked reserve.

The meeting opened at 12.15 p.m.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for her inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Harris.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with paragraphs 9 – 13 of the Council's Code of Conduct and regulations made under chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

The dispensation granted to Councillor Green in respect of cemetery matters was noted.

3. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2018/19 – VISITS 1 & 2 OF 6**

The Clerk presented the first interim Internal Audit Report for the year 2018/19 prepared by Darkin-Miller – Chartered Accountants.

The following areas had been reviewed during the audit visit:-

- Proper Bookkeeping

- Risk Management
- Income, with a specific focus on:
 - a) Boat Park
- Bank Reconciliation
- Payroll

Members noted that four high, two medium and one low recommendation had been made. With regards to the high recommendations, it was noted that these related to the Boat Park and that the issues were in the process of being rectified.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Morris, and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the interim Internal Audit Report, Visits 1 & 2,
for the 2018/19 financial year be accepted.

4. (a) **DRAFT ESTIMATES 2019/20**

The Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer outlined the draft budget report and stated that any decisions made today would primarily be for recommendation to full Council at the Estimates meeting to be held on 21st January 2019.

The Town Clerk outlined the following sections of the report for individual consideration:

Section 3.6, Boat Park: It was noted that a 5% discount had been proposed for occupants of row D in 2018/19 for the next year. Discussion arose as to the inconvenience that had been caused during works at the Boat Park and difficulties encountered with the realignment of this row.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bishop and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on
21st January 2019 that a 5% discount be given to
occupants of row D in 2018/19 for the 2019/20
season.

Section 3.7, Beach Gardens, Bowls: The Town Clerk contextualised the discussion by stating that the capital project to install an AstroTurf surface on the Bowling Green was now unlikely to be going ahead. The Council had previously committed capital expenditure of £112,250 to this project, with £67,000 relating to the artificial surface. Given the removal of this part of the project it was now proposed that a grant of £45,000, being the balance of original costs, be paid to the Bowls Club to finance the refurbishment of the surrounds. It was noted that this sum had been included in the capital programme Appendix D. Discussion arose concerning a licence agreement between the Council and the Bowls Club and the commencement date of a new lease. It was noted that the Bowls Club had requested a £nil licence fee for the next year, using the monies to finance a Bowling Green re-turfing project. However, it was noted that in order to ensure transparency it was proper that the club should pay an agreed licence fee and then apply for a grant. The progress that had been made during discussions with the Bowls Club was noted.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bishop and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on
21st January 2019 that the Bowling Club pay the
licence fee as per agreement and apply for a grant
towards the re-turfing of the Bowling Green.

Section 3.8, Tourist Information Centre, Stock: The Visitor Services Manager outlined the high stock sales realised during the 2018 season. It was requested that an additional budget of £2,500 for stock purchases be approved to allow for further stock sales through to March 2019. It was noted that expenditure had been committed in line with discussions held with the Town Mayor, Councillor Finch and Councillor Green.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Morris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND to the Council meeting on 17th December 2018 that the stock purchases budget for 2018/19 be increased by £2,500 to £11,500.

Section 3.11, Fishermen's Huts: The Town Clerk outlined the considerable disruption that the fishermen had encountered during the recent improvement works on the fishermen's huts and jetty. It was reported that the Council had committed large sums to the works, however, the nature of the disruption to the fishermen was noted. Following a brief discussion;

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bishop and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND to the Council meeting on 17th December 2018 that the fishermen's hut tenants be given a 25% reduction on the annual rent for 2018/19, approximately £1,750 in total.

Section 4.3, Boat Park Attendant/Seafront Advisor: The Visitor Services Manager outlined his proposals to combine the approved posts for the 2019 summer season and the benefits that he felt would bring to the Council.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Finch and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on 21st January 2019 that the seasonal posts of boat park attendant and seafront advisor be combined for a trial in 2019.

Section 4.5, Business rates: The Town Clerk highlighted that the Council is currently incurring costs at both the new and old depots and that this will continue until the Council officially vacated the old site.

Following a brief discussion it was proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Morris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That this matter be referred to the Depot Working Party for consideration.

Section 4.13, Grants/Donations: The Town Clerk highlighted the Council's commitment to an annual contribution to DCC for sponsorship of the school crossing patrol at Swanage First School (approximately £3.7k in 2019/20) and to the Citizens Advice Bureau of £1,000.

Following a brief discussion during which the important contribution that the Council made to these bodies was noted, it was proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on 21st January 2019 that the Council continues its contribution to the School Crossing Patrol and Citizens Advice Bureau and that the

grants/donations budget for other local groups is set at £10,000 for 2019/20.

The matter of effectively communicating Council matters was briefly discussed and it was noted that more staffing resources would be available for this purpose in the next financial year.

Appendix B, Extraordinary/One-off Revenue Expenditure: Members discussed the list of one-off revenue expenditure listed for 2019/20 in Appendix B to the report. Given that the matter of the refurbishment of the Mayoral chain was raised in public participation time, members discussed in detail the provision of £5,000 in the budget for this purpose. It was generally agreed that the chain was in a state of disrepair, however, the financing of any works to the chain remained a moot point with the possibility of sponsorship being raised. It was further noted that three quotes for the cost of refurbishment were being sought.

Following discussion, during which it was agreed to engage members further in consideration of this matter through a working party consisting of the Town Mayor and Councillors Finch, Green and Trite, it was proposed by Councillor Green, seconded by the Town Mayor and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on 21st January 2019 that Appendix B, including the estimated cost of £5,000 for the refurbishment of the mayoral chain remains in the budget for 2019/20.

It was **FURTHER AGREED:**

That alternative funding avenues should be sought for the mayoral chain prior to any spending being committed.

It was noted that the replacement of posts for CCTV was included in the budget. The matter of increasing the provision of CCTV in specific areas of the town was discussed. The importance of liaising closely with the Police in this matter was stressed and a working party was appointed to explore this further consisting of the Town Mayor and Councillors Morris, Whitwam, Finch, Green and Bishop, together with police representatives.

Appendix C, Reserves and Balances: The Town Clerk highlighted the use of the FJ Grace Trust reserve in part-financing the bandstand replacement. The De Moulham Trust backroads reserve was briefly discussed. It was noted that no projects relating to this reserve had been included in the capital programme for approval at this point and as such only estimated appropriations to this reserve had been projected.

Appendix D, Capital Programme: Consideration was given to the proposed capital programme by Members. It was noted that this programme was fluid, with several amendments to projects expected to develop prior to the Estimates meeting in January 2019. A provisional revision to the programme was distributed during the meeting. The main revisions were the consolidation of several projects into a Community Seafront Coastal Defence Project. The nature of the financing of this was unknown at the present time, however, it may partly form a capital grant to another body. This was programmed for 2020/21.

It was further noted that the grant to the football club would now most likely form a grant to Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust who were leading this project, with £20,000 expected to be expended in 2018/19 and the balance of £240,000 in

2020/21. Revisions to the costs of the bandstand and surrounds were expected given tender submissions, and discussed further in Agenda Item 6.

The Peveril Point Road stabilisation scheme was briefly discussed and it was noted that the provisional costs of £75,000 committed to this scheme may well escalate. It was noted that this scheme would need to be discussed in greater detail given more information about the nature of the required works.

It was also noted that the Council was awaiting confirmation of the requirement of the contribution to the new roof at Purbeck Business Centre.

Appendix F, Scale of Fees and Charges: Consideration was given to Appendix F, the proposed Scale of Fees and Charges 2019/20.

Due to Councillor Green's dispensation regarding cemetery matters not extending to the approval of the relevant fees and charges, as set out in section 13, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Morris, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates Meeting on 21st January 2019 that the Scale of Charges for 2019/20, sections 1 to 12 and 14 be approved and adopted.

Councillor Green declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the following item, by reason of her spouse being manager of the local undertakers, and left the meeting.

It was further proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Morris and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates Meeting on 21st January 2019 that the Scale of Charges for 2019/20, section 13 be approved and adopted.

Councillor Green re-entered the meeting.

Given the nature of items 5 and 6 on the agenda it was noted that the recommendation of the precept levy should be made following the discussion of these items.

(b) **RESERVES AND BALANCES POLICY**

Consideration was given to the Council's Reserves and Balances Policy, previously revised and adopted 22nd January 2018. It was reported that two amendments had been made to the policy, with the removal of reference to the Council Tax Support Grant due to the termination of this payment, and the inclusion of a Community Seafront Defence Project Reserve, which will hold the funds contributed by Wessex Water following an Enforcement Undertaking.

Consideration was given to the adequacy of the Council's projected reserves. It was noted that due to the Council's considerable capital programme, the Council's usable reserves were expected to fall to £5.2m by the end of the current financial year and reduce to £2.5m by March 2022. It was reported by the Town Clerk that the FJ Grace reserve was expected to be depleted by the end of the current financial year, with the reserve being utilised to part-finance the bandstand replacement. It was further reported that funds currently held in the Community Infrastructure Levy were due to be spent in the 2020/21 financial year, part-financing the planned improvements to the parade railings/Institute Road (under the umbrella of the Community Seafront Coastal Defence Project). It was noted that appropriations to this reserve had not been forecast over the course of the estimates due to the unpredictable nature of the source financing of this reserve.

The reserves projected to be held in the Festive Lights and De Moulham Back Roads reserves were noted to be static during the term of the estimates. It was stated that currently no programme of works or equipment purchases had been included in the capital programme for either of these areas. However, it was further noted that this was subject to change and may be included in future capital expenditure plans.

With regards to the General Fund Balance estimates, and further to a matter raised during public participation, discussion arose with regards to projections for car parking income. It was noted that a prudent view had been taken on the estimated revenue to be raised from car parking, which can invariably fluctuate from budget, both positively and negatively.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Green, and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on 21st January 2019 that the revised Policy on Reserves and Balances be approved and adopted.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Green, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That, under Standing Order No. 1 c), in the public interest, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under agenda item 5 & 6 (in relation to legal and contractual matters).

5. **FISHERMEN'S HUTS/SLIPWAY AND BOAT PARK-UPDATE**

The Town Clerk reported that he was unable to provide an update of the revised costs of the project at the present time, as these had not yet been made available to him. It was noted that this matter would now be discussed at the full Council Meeting to be held on Monday 17th December 2018.

6. **BANDSTAND-INITIAL REPORT ON TENDER COSTS**

The Town Clerk reported that three tenders had been submitted for the bandstand replacement, although two had not been completed correctly. It was noted that a further tender process could be completed relatively quickly should this be required. It was further noted that the surrounds and bandstand were two separate tenders, with two tenders having been received for the surrounds works.

A discussion arose as to the specification in the tenders and whether this could be revised in order to reduce costs if necessary, particularly seating. It was noted that a Working Party meeting, which included the Friends of the Bandstand fundraising group, was due to be held in the afternoon of 12th December where the project could be discussed in more detail. Following further discussion, during which the matter of external funding was raised, Members were reassured that no order for works would be placed without full Council approval.

Following the discussion of items 5 & 6, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bishop, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on 21st January 2019 that the Estimates Book, including the recommendations in item 4 above and with any required revisions, be approved and the precept to be levied for 2019/20 be held at £718,030.

7. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

The Operations Manager informed Members of the installation of dementia friendly signage in the Council's public conveniences.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee would be held at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 13th February 2019.

The meeting concluded at 1.50 p.m.
