

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **TUESDAY, 10<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2020** at 9.30 a.m.

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

Councillor C. Finch  
Councillor A. Harris  
Councillor M. Whitwam

Also in attendance:-

Councillor T. Foster  
Councillor C. Moreton  
Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk  
Miss A. Spencer – Finance Manager  
Mr C. Milmer – Visitor Services Manager from 9.40 a.m. to 10.05 a.m.

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for his inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Trite.

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.

**Agenda Item No. 8)** – Councillor Bonfield declared a non-pecuniary interest in the terms and conditions of use of the taxi rank under the Code of Conduct by reason of being employed as a taxi driver.

3. **TO REVIEW NOTES OF NON-QUORATE MEETING OF POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2020**

The contents of the notes of the meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 were noted.

Further to Standing Order 3 a. at the Chairman's discretion, Item 5 on the agenda was brought forward to Item 4.

4. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2019/20 Visit 5 of 6**

The Clerk presented the fifth interim Internal Audit Report of the 2019/20 financial year prepared by Darkin-Miller – Chartered Accountants.

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

- Payments
- Risk Management
- Income

Members noted that one high, three medium and two low priority recommendations had been made. The management response and implementation dates were noted.

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

That the fifth interim Internal Audit Report for the 2019/20 financial year be accepted.

Members thanked all Council employees for their continued hard work.

5. **OPERATION OF MARKET 2020 SEASON**

Members were informed that the current licensee had informed the Council that they would not be operating the market for the 2020 season. Members wished the licensee well.

Discussion ensued regarding the future operation of the market and a briefing note submitted by the Visitor Services Manager following a meeting of the Market Working Party. The Visitor Services Manager addressed the recommendations made in his briefing note, being:

1. That the Council's preferred option continues to be that Markets JC operates the market;
2. Until advised otherwise by Markets JC, work should continue to implement the working party proposals, with a start date of 17<sup>th</sup> April 2020;
3. The Council joins NABMA, the nation association for market operators, at a cost of £385;
4. The proposed fees and terms and conditions and plot sizes are brought to full Council at its next meeting; and
5. Additional hours for the Town Advisor are reviewed by the appropriate committee.

It was noted that the first recommendation was no longer an option.

The working party had recommended running a low-key market, run in-house with a focus on crafts and produce. Staffing and operational issues were discussed and it was noted that these warranted further consideration. Visitor and customer expectations would also need to be managed, given a smaller, restricted market. It was noted that the recommendations of this meeting would be reviewed at the next full Council meeting and the Working Party would meet again after this meeting.

The impact of running the market in-house across all departments was highlighted by the Town Clerk, and it was noted that Members should be mindful that this could impact on Council priorities. The Visitor Services Manager stated that the market could not be operational until 17<sup>th</sup> April due to staffing issues.

It was proposed by Councillor Finch seconded by Councillor Harris, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Council becomes a member of NABMA and that the Visitor Services Manager's proposals for running the market in-house be taken forward for approval by full Council.

The Visitor Services Manager left the meeting.

6. **REVIEW OF CHARGES: PURBECK RUNNERS & H2O ADVENTURES**

It was reported that two charges which were under separate licence agreements had been included in the Council's Scale of Fees and Charges for 2020/21. It was noted that the annual charge for Purbeck Runners for an annual licence was £1,242 and £500 for H2O Adventures.

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

That the charge for an annual licence for H2O Adventures and Purbeck Runners be approved at

£500 and £1,242 respectively and the charges be removed from the published Scale of Fees and Charges.

7. **TO CONSIDER A DRAFT TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020/21 AND TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT**

Consideration was given to the draft Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2020/21. It was noted that although the Council did not currently have any non-treasury investments, the report provided guidance should the Council wish to consider these in the next financial year. The Finance Manager highlighted the enhanced risk of these types of investments.

Although described as a lengthy policy document, it was noted that this provided important guidance for investment activity for officers in the next financial year. It was further noted that this would sit alongside the Retail Client Suitability Report (RCSR) issued by Arlingclose. It was reported that there had not been any significant changes to the Council's treasury strategy from the current financial year.

It was highlighted that the issue of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investments and Ethical Investments had been included in the strategy document with reference to the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement (TMPS). The Finance Manager reported that, once the criteria for ESG and Ethical Investments had been determined, these would be written into the TMPS. It was noted that an investment working party would be held in the near future in order to determine this criteria.

It was proposed by Councillor Finch, seconded by Councillor Harris, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

**TO RECOMMEND** That the draft Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2020/21 be approved and adopted.

Further to his declaration of interest under Minute No.2, Councillor Bonfield left the meeting during consideration of the following item and Councillor Harris assumed the chair.

8. **TAXI RANK – TERMS & CONDITIONS OF USE**

Members discussed the draft Terms & Conditions of Issue for an annual taxi permit and the Code of Operation of the taxi rank on Station Approach that had been distributed. It was noted that the Code of Operation drew together the Code of Operation previously agreed by Council in February 2000 and the main points extracted from the Licensing and Policy Guide issued by the unitary authority for a Hackney Carriage Licence.

It was reported that the charging process had improved since this matter was last discussed with the centralisation of booking and payment. The desire to move towards an annual licence was noted.

Members noted that there was no reference to idling of engines and following further discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Whitwam, seconded by Councillor Harris, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the Code of Conduct for use of the Station Approach Taxi Rank be approved, subject to reference being made to no idling of engines.

Councillor Bonfield re-entered the meeting and re-assumed the chair.

9. **INSURANCE – ANNUAL RENEWAL & CLAIMS UPDATE**

Members were informed that an annual renewal of the Council’s insurance policy had been undertaken. It was reported that the Council’s insurance policy was in the last year of a 3 year contract with Zurich, with an option of an additional 2 years. The premium for 2020/21 was noted.

It was reported that one claim was currently live, this being storm damage to the Depot roof.

10. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**  
**Matters for Forthcoming Agendas**

- a) James Day Trust
- b) Review of Grant Policy- Grants to Individuals
- c) Corporate Plan 2020/21 – The Town Clerk reported that the draft plan had been delayed.
- d) Date for Investments working group – to be confirmed.
- e) Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Adoption of Publication scheme

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Harris, 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 items 11, 12 and 13 (in relation to legal and financial matters).

11. **SCHEDULE OF DEBTORS**

An aged debtors report as at 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 was submitted for information. It was reported that there were some concerns regarding one debtor, although it was noted that officers had delegated authority to act in this matter. All other outstanding debts were expected to be paid. Concern over the level of debt outstanding of one debtor was noted, with this being a recharge of electricity. The possibility of the lessee installing their own meter was mooted.

The aged debtors report was noted.

12. **MONITORING REPORT – LEASES AND LICENCES**

The Town Clerk reported that the report previously titled ‘Review of Council Priorities and Projects’ would now be reviewed as a monitoring report of leases and licences. It was noted that projects were now being reviewed by the Projects sub-committee on a regular basis and general issues were being brought forward through the Corporate plan. As such only licences and leases were required to be reviewed by this committee.

It was noted that the assignment of the Museum and Heritage Toilets was now complete.

It was reported that another legal advisor had been identified with local government knowledge and that his services could be engaged to complete some of the work on outstanding licence agreements. Members agreed that officers should make enquiries and seek a quote.

Regarding the acquisition of St. Mark’s Playing Fields, it was noted that a different firm of solicitors had been appointed to act for the Council in this matter. It was further noted that a 21yr lease from the date of the agreement would be sought.

The monitoring report was noted.

13. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK REGISTER**

The Town Clerk informed Members that the Corporate Risk Register distributed with the Agenda papers incorporated the additions and amendments that had been identified in the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020, these being:

- The management of volunteers should be added as an Operational Risk, given the Council's developing relationship with groups such as Sustainable Swanage, Litter Free Purbeck and the Friends of Northbrook Cemetery.
- The policies that require amendment should be prioritised and realistic target dates established (e.g. Equality Policy, Asset Management Plan).
- The need to formalise a business continuity plan.
- The need to incorporate potential ESG/Ethical investments in the investment income section was noted, as follows 'Ethical investment decisions will be made in the context of the Council's adopted Treasury Management Policy Statement'.
- A revised FOI Publication Scheme could be adopted in the near future.
- Planned Health and Safety training for managers.
- The recent adoption of revised Financial Regulations.
- The formation of a community group to take forward the development of a community emergency plan.
- All references to the District and County Councils should read Dorset Council, the new unitary Authority.

During the debate further amendments were proposed with reference to the inclusion of:

- Compliance with Website Accessibility Regulations; and
- The need to update the Council's Transparency Code webpage.

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

**TO RECOMMEND:**

That the amended Corporate Risk Register for  
2020/21 be adopted.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee would be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Council to be held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

The meeting concluded at 11.05 a.m.

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