

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 14th DECEMBER 2016** at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor S. Poultney (Mayor) – Chairman.

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor C. Finch
Councillor G. Green
Councillor A. Harris
Councillor M. Whitwam

Also in attendance:-

Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk
Mrs L. Burgess – Senior Administration & Finance Officer
Miss A. Spencer – Finance Officer
Mr C. Milmer – Visitor Services Manager (until 5.45 p.m.)

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

1. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for his inability to attend the Meeting was received from Councillor Bonfield.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interests and 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. **DRAFT ESTIMATES 2017/18**

(a) **Draft Estimates**

Consideration was given to a detailed report which provided a commentary on the preliminary revenue budgets for 2017/18, together with planned capital expenditure and contributions to reserves and balances. The budget setting principles (agreed by this Committee in November 2016) had been incorporated in the draft budgets.

In considering the draft estimates for 2017/18, consideration was given to the Council's current financial position and the probable out-turn for 2016/17. The net cost of services was projected to be significantly below budget, as a result of a number of factors, including an increase in car parking revenue and deferred or reduced expenditure on cemetery maintenance, parks and operations, beaches and foreshore, and central services. This would enable contributions of approximately £300,000 to be made either to earmarked reserves or the direct funding of capital expenditure, resulting in an end of year balance on the general fund in the region of £800,000, little changed from the position in April 2016.

A summary of the Council's greatest sources of income and expenditure during the last four financial years, together with the probable out-turns for 2016/17 and the draft budget estimates for 2017/18, was submitted for information.

During the ensuing discussion, the recommendation from the Tourism Committee to continue to deploy RNLI lifeguards for 2017/18 was endorsed, including the presence of a third lifeguard during the peak season to man a water safety craft. It was proposed by Councillor Bishop, seconded by Councillor Finch, and RESOLVED:-

To approve inclusion of funding for the RNLI lifeguard service in the 2017/18 draft budgets at an estimated cost of £22,000.

Further consideration was given to the recommendation of the Transport Committee to agree the purchase and installation of an Electric Vehicle Charging Point at Mermond Place Car Park. It was AGREED:

To approve inclusion of funding for the purchase and installation of an Electric Vehicle Charging Point in the 2017/18 draft budgets at an estimated cost of £4,000 with an allowance of an additional £1,000 for running costs.

It was also noted that as in previous years the sum of £10,000 had been allocated for Grants, Donations and Contributions to Partner Organisations in the draft budgets. Since the Town Council's adoption of the General Power of Competence earlier in the year, these donations were no longer made under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, and a schedule of grant requests received would be circulated for consideration at the Estimates meeting on 23rd January 2017.

A separate budget had been allocated for payments made for the provision of services by third parties, such as funding for the school crossing patrol at Swanage Primary School and the grant to the Swanage & Purbeck Development Trust to support the continuation of the youth service. As a consequence the full £10,000 of the grants and donations budget would be available to local charities and voluntary groups.

Consideration was then given to the request received from Dorset County Council – Highways seeking funding of the wages costs of the Swanage Primary School crossing patrol in 2017/18, and it was RESOLVED:-

To approve inclusion of funding for the Mount Scar school crossing patrol in the 2017/18 draft budgets at an estimated cost of £2,500.

Attention was drawn to the schedule of one-off revenue expenditure included at Appendix 1 of the Preliminary Budget Report. It was proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

To approve the schedule of one-off revenue expenditure for inclusion in the draft budgets for final approval at the Estimates Meeting on 23rd January 2017.

Consideration was given to the Council's General Fund Balance and the precept to be set for 2017/18.

During the ensuing discussion, it was reported that notification had now been received from Purbeck District Council that the Council Tax base had been increased by 2.4%.

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

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on 23rd January 2017 that the Estimates Book be approved and the level of precept to be levied for 2017/18 be increased by 2.4% to £703,950.

(b) **Scale of Charges 2017/18**

Consideration was given to the draft Scale of Fees and Charges 2017/18 that had been circulated to all Members.

Arising from the above, a question was raised regarding the fees for the use of the tennis courts for youth coaching, and it was agreed that the matter be referred to the Visitor Services Manager prior to it being brought back to the Council for further consideration.

The inclusion in past years' scale of charges of a reduced price for the use of beach huts by community organisations was also highlighted. In acknowledging the benefits for local residents, it was felt that this facility should be dealt with through the grant application process in future.

A question was also raised regarding applications/approval/siting of memorial benches, and it was AGREED:-

That the Council's policy in respect of memorial benches be referred for consideration at a future meeting of the General Operations Committee.

The Town Mayor declared a non-pecuniary interest in the fee payable under the beach concessionaires' licence by reason of a family connection.

It was proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Green and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That Councillor Bishop assume the chair in the Town Mayor's absence.

The Town Clerk provided an update in respect of ongoing negotiations with the beach concessionaires regarding their licence fee, which was included in the draft scale of fees and charges.

The Town Mayor re-entered the meeting and re-assumed the chair.

It was noted that it was intended that from this year onwards the list of rents and other fees payable in respect of Town Council property would be set out in a separate list of such income, and would no longer be included in the schedule of fees and charges.

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

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates Meeting on 23rd January 2017 that the Scale of Fees and Charges 2017/18 be approved and adopted.

In considering the fees and charges to be levied at the boat park upon its reopening, the possibility of reducing charges for the last two months of the 2016/17 financial year was suggested as an incentive to boat owners to return to the facility following a two-year closure. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bishop and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Visitor Services Manager be authorised to offer a discounted rate on the 2016/17 scale of charges to boat owners wanting to return to the Boat Park prior to 1st May 2017.

(c) **Capital Programme**

Further to Minute No. 7 a) of the General Operations Committee held on 23rd November 2016, and a subsequent Workshop held to prioritise the most urgent capital projects in 2017/18, consideration was given to a revised Schedule of Estimated Capital Expenditure for the years 2017/18 – 2019/20, and the Priority Capital Programme for 2017/18.

In light of the decision not to proceed with the construction of new public toilets and changing facilities at Forres Field, it was agreed to re-allocate the planned expenditure set out in the previously agreed capital programme towards the refurbishment of the existing toilet block at Main Beach car park and the improvement of the Football Club's facilities at Day's Park.

Following discussion, it was AGREED:-

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates Meeting that the revised Schedule of Estimated Capital Expenditure for the years 2017/18 – 2019/20 be accepted and that the Town Council agrees the revised Priority Capital Programme for 2017/18.

(d) **Reserves and Balances**

It was reported that in addition to the Useable Capital Receipts Reserve (containing the funds received from the disposal of the Holiday Park and other assets such as Herston Public Conveniences), the Council had established the following earmarked reserves:

- Festive Lights
- Vehicle and Plant replacement
- King George's Play Area and Skate Park equipment replacement
- Forres Field changing facilities
- General Play Equipment replacement
- Car Park Machine upgrade
- Tennis Court refurbishment (to receive contributions from STC and Swanage Tennis Club)
- Repairs and Renewals Fund
- De Moulham Estate Service Road maintenance
- Public conveniences refurbishment
- IT equipment replacement
- F.J. Grace will trust (for public amenities in Swanage)
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Insurance and contingency reserve

It was noted that the above reserves contained £1,128,273 as at 31st March 2016 and it was proposed that a net contribution of £70,710 be made in the current financial year, £5,490 less than anticipated a year ago.

The draft three-year capital programme showed £280,000 being spent from the reserves by 31st March 2020.

It was further noted that during 2016/17 £1,710 had been received from the District Council under the Community Infrastructure Levy on new development. Sums in this reserve must be spent within five years on either the provision,

improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or anything else that is concerned with addressing the demands that development places on this area.

Further to the decision not to proceed with the construction of changing facilities at Forres Field, referred to in minute 3)b) above, it was agreed that the Forres Field Changing Facilities reserve be re-allocated to a new reserve to establish funds for improvements to the Football Club's facilities at Day's Park.

It was also noted that £5,000 would be set aside to establish a reserve to fund future repairs to the Shore Road beach huts.

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

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on 23rd January 2017 that the updated Policy on Reserves and Balances be approved and adopted.

4. **DRAFT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2017/18 TO 2019/20**

Further to Minute No. 9 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee held on 9th November 2016, consideration was given to the draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20 (copies circulated to all Members prior to the Meeting).

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

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates Meeting that the draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2017/18 to 2019/20 be approved and adopted.

5. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2016/17**

The Clerk presented the second interim Internal Audit Report for the year 2016/17 prepared by Darkin-Miller – Chartered Accountants.

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

- Risk Management
- Income, with specific focus on:
 - (a) Cemeteries.
 - (b) TIC Rent.
 - (c) TIC Cash.

Members noted that four recommendations had been made, and each had been prioritised as being of low importance.

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

That the second interim Internal Audit Report for the year 2016/17 be accepted.

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

- (a) **General Operations Committee** – Memorial benches.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee would be held on Wednesday, 15th February 2017.

In closing the meeting Members wished to record their thanks to officers for their work in preparing the draft budgets, and gave special thanks to the Finance Officer, Alison Spencer.

The meeting concluded at 6.30 p.m.
