

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 4th NOVEMBER 2015** at 4.00 p.m.

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

Also in attendance:-

Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk
Mrs L. Burgess – Senior Administration & Finance Officer
Miss A. Spencer – Finance Officer

Public Participation Time

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

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Bishop, Suttle and Trite.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interest under the Code of Conduct as defined by regulations made under section 30 (3) of the Localism Act 2011.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

3. **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Consideration was given to the draft Terms of Reference for the newly constituted Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee.

Following discussion, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bonfield, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the draft Terms of Reference for the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee be agreed, and submitted to the next full meeting of the Council to be held on 23rd November 2015 for adoption.

4. **BUDGET REPORT – INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AND TREASURY REPORT 2015/16**

Consideration was given to a detailed report setting out the principal sources of the Town Council's income and expenditure.

Overall there was a surplus on the general fund of £468,167 for the 1st half of the 2015/16 financial year. This was £32,346 greater than budgeted for the period, with the main factors being due to the Council's investments and the continuing good performance of the LAMIT property fund, and the continued vacancies of several budgeted staffing posts.

Reference was then made to Minute No. 4 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management meeting held on 5th August 2015, and it was reported that despite the discounted prices for the top level beach huts on Shore Road introduced for the remainder of the August and September period, occupancy levels and income had been well below budget for the summer season.

Further discussion ensued, during which it was noted that some tenants of the top level beach huts had purchased 'clip-on tables' and bar stools, which increased their panoramic view from the huts, and it was agreed that the possible provision of such equipment for the top level beach huts be investigated.

The Council's investment activity, included within the Budget Report, was noted.

5. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT**

Consideration was given to the 2nd Quarter Monitoring Report of the Capital Programme 2015/16.

The Report reflected the progress and expenditure in accordance with the approved schemes, and Members agreed that the 2nd Quarter Monitoring Report of the Capital Programme 2015/16 be noted.

Arising therefrom, Members again referred to the War Memorial Wall, and it was AGREED:-

That the matter be referred for consideration at the next meeting of the Council to be held on 23rd November 2015.

6. **CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2014/15**

Further to Minute No. 134 of the Council meeting held on 26th October 2015, consideration was given to the matters contained in the Report submitted from BDO LLP (the Council's external auditor).

Following discussion, it was AGREED:-

That advice be obtained from the Council's Internal Auditor as part of a review of the Town Council's Asset Register, and that clarification regarding the accounting practice for the Bank and Investments within the Annual Return be sought, officers to continue with current practice until advised otherwise.

7. **BUDGET SETTING 2016/17 – AGREEMENT OF BUDGET PRINCIPLES**

A document outlining the budget setting process for 2016/17 and projections for the two financial years beyond was submitted for information.

Members noted the timescale of Committee meetings at which the fees and charges appropriate to the Committee would be considered, as well as discussion around the revenue and capital budgets, prior to submission of the draft budget to the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee on 9th December 2015.

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

That the budget setting principles for 2016/17 be approved, amended to incorporate a freeze in the Council's fees and charges.

8. **JAMES DAY WILL TRUST**

The Clerk reported on the constitution of the James Day Will Trust which was created by the Will of the late James Day following his death on 30th March 1949.

Lloyds Private Banking is sole Trustee of the Trust which consists of James Day's residual Estate which contains a small investment portfolio and a plot of land which has been leased to Swanage Cricket Club. The Council currently pays an Annual Management Fee to the Bank, and it has been suggested by the Bank that the Council may be interested in taking over as Trustee of the Trust.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by the Town Mayor, and RESOLVED:-

To liaise with Lloyds Private Banking and, if necessary, the Charity Commission, to discuss options for the future management of the Trust.

9. **WORKING TOGETHER: A PILOT PROJECT FOR LOCALITY WORKING IN DORSET**

Further to Minute No. 7 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 5th August 2015, consideration was given to the draft Report, Working Together: A Pilot Project for Locality Working in Dorset. The Report contained recommendations, and actions to achieve the recommendations, in order to progress the proposed joint working arrangements.

Following discussion, it was AGREED:-

To support the recommendations set out in the Report and to give delegated authority to the Town Clerk to act in the matter in the best interests of Swanage Town Council.

10. **INSURANCE**

(a) **Insurance Cover for Fundraising Events**

Further to an issue raised at the Council meeting held on 28th September 2015 during Public Participation Time, the Clerk reported on discussions held with Zurich, the Council's insurers, regarding insurance cover for fundraising events held on Council-owned land.

It was AGREED:-

That insurance cover be provided, if required, for the 'Switch on Swanage' Christmas event, and that further consideration be given to the future provision of insurance cover for fundraising events.

(b) **Insurance Claims**

A list of insurance claims and settlement details from 2007 to date was submitted, for information.

11. **OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATIONS 2014**

The Clerk reported on the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 which came into force on 6th August 2014 and introduced requirements to allow the public greater access to local government decision making.

The Council had adopted a new protocol to manage this on 18th August 2014, but the Regulations also required that certain decisions made by officers must be recorded and published online.

A detailed Briefing Note had been circulated to members of the Committee prior to the meeting, and following discussion, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bonfield, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To agree £10,000 as the threshold over which officers should record decisions made under general authorisation to award a contract or incur expenditure which materially affects the Council's financial position.

It was further AGREED:-

To adopt the sample form 'Record of Officer Decision made under the Openness of Local Government Bodies

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

- (a) Code of Conduct.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Bonfield, 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 13 and 14 (regarding legal and contractual matters.

13. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND PROJECTS**

Further to Minute No. 8 of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 5th August 2015, an updated schedule of Council Priorities and Projects was submitted, for information.

In presenting the Report, the Town Clerk updated Members on outstanding issues, and also gave a brief summary of matters that had now been concluded.

14. **CLARIFICATION AND REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL’S POLICY ON DISPOSAL OF ASSETS**

It was AGREED:-

That this matter be deferred for consideration at a future meeting of the Council.

15. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee be held on Wednesday, 9th December 2015 at 4.30 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 5.35 p.m.
