

Minutes of the **FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY,**
14th DECEMBER 2022 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor T Foster (Town Mayor) – Chair

Councillor J Bishop
Councillor M Bonfield
Councillor C Moreton (from 2.15 p.m.)
Councillor W Trite
Councillor M Whitwam

Also in attendance: -

Councillor G Suttle

Dr M Ayres Town Clerk
Miss A Spencer Finance Manager

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 Harris and Tomes.

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. 5 (a) – Councillor Bonfield declared a non-pecuniary interest in the scale of charges under the Code of Conduct by reason of being employed as a taxi driver and hiring a grid space in the boat park.

Agenda Item No. 5 (a) – Councillors Bishop and Bonfield declared non-pecuniary interests in the scale of charges under the Code of Conduct by reason of being regular hirers of Town Council beach huts.

3. **REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF ALL COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

Further to Minute No. 3 of the Meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee held on 7th September 2022, consideration was given to draft terms of reference for all Council committees, sub-committees and advisory committees. In addition to changes proposed at recent committee meetings, a list of suggested minor amendments from the Town Clerk was also reviewed. It was noted that it was extremely helpful to have all the terms of reference gathered together in one volume.

It was proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Bonfield and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the draft Committee Terms of Reference, as amended, be presented to the Council for adoption.

4. **CAPITAL PROJECTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

(a) **To Approve Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th November 2022**
Proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Bishop and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee held on 30th November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Consideration was given to the following recommendations contained in the Minutes:-

9) **Burlington Chine – Public Conveniences**

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Bishop and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That an annual survey be commissioned to monitor the condition of the pipework at Burlington Chine public conveniences, with a sum of £30,000 being retained in the Public Conveniences Reserve for re-lining the pipes if that is deemed necessary or a critical failure occurs.

It was FURTHER RESOLVED:

TO RECOMMEND:

That works to the external frontage of Burlington Chine public conveniences be undertaken and that the budget be increased to £7,000.

10) **Recreation Ground and Sandpit Field Footpaths**

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Bishop and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That repairs be made to the footpaths on the Recreation Ground and Sandpit Field and that a budget of up to £27,000 be allocated.

11) **Tourist Information Centre – Beach Cleaning/Storage Areas**

It was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Bishop and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That repair and refurbishment works to the two areas adjoining the Tourist Information Centre be authorised and that the budget be increased to £18,000.

12) **Skate Park – Equipment Removal and Resurfacing**

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

TO RECOMMEND:

That a contract be issued under Dorset Council's Repairs, Maintenance, Minor and Small Capital Works Framework Agreement: Lot 11 for the resurfacing of the Skate Park for a sum of £27,793.05, to be actioned once the redundant equipment has been removed.

5. **BUDGET SETTING 2023/24**

(a) **Draft Scale of Fees and Charges**

Consideration was given to a draft scale of fees and charges for the Council's services for the 2023/24 financial year, drawn up further to discussion at the

Tourism & Local Economy Committee, the Community Services Committee and a council working party.

Councillor Moreton entered the meeting at 2.15 p.m.

The charges applied to the Council's long stay car parks, in both summer and winter, were discussed in some detail. On balance, it was agreed that increases in charges should be focussed on the summer season in order to retain lower charges over the winter months. Officers were tasked to undertake a further review of summer parking charges prior to the next meeting of this committee in January 2023.

(b) **To consider request for bulk business discount on North Beach permits further to discussion at Tourism & Local Economy Committee on 16th November 2022**

Further to Minute No. 14)c) of the Tourism & Local Economy Committee held on 16th November 2022, consideration was given to a request from the Chamber of Trade that the bulk purchase of up to 20 car park permits at North Beach Car Park should be considered as part of the budget setting process.

It was noted that a discount rate was already available for the purchase of permits at North Beach Car Park. It was reported that a local hotel was particularly interested in acquiring allocated parking spaces and Members agreed that this could be given further consideration. Officers were tasked with taking forward discussions with interested businesses and to report further to a future meeting.

(c) **Draft Capital Programme and Minor Works Schedule**

Consideration was given to the draft Capital Programme and One-Off Minor Works Schedule for 2023/24. This had been considered by each of the relevant Council Committees, and changes made following discussion at the meeting of the Capital Projects Sub-Committee held on 30th November. The possibility of funding the £76,000 allocated for repairs to the Stone Quay, Parish Slipway and other coastal assets from the Community Infrastructure Levy reserve was raised, and it was agreed that officers would explore this prior to the next meeting of the Committee. It was AGREED:

That the Draft Capital Programme and Minor Works Schedule is approved for further consideration as part of the budget setting process.

(d) **Draft Reserves Policy**

Consideration was given to the Council's Reserves Policy, last revised and adopted 17th January 2022. It was reported that the following revisions had been made to the draft revised policy document, namely:

- Earmarked Reserves – Community Infrastructure Levy Reserve, wording incorporated to clarify that this reserved would in the future be 'utilised in the first instance for works to 'infrastructure' as defined in Section 216 of the Planning Act, 2008.
- Earmarked Reserves – Football Club Facilities to be closed following the payment during the year of the funds held in the reserve as a grant to Swanage and Herston Football Club.

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

TO RECOMMEND to the Estimates meeting on 16th January 2023:
That the revised Reserves Policy be approved and adopted.

6. **INTERNAL AUDITOR REPORT 2022/23 – VISITS 2 & 3 OF 6**

The second interim Internal Audit Report of the 2022/23 financial year prepared by Darkin-Miller – Chartered Accountants was submitted for information.

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

- Payments (work in progress)
- Risk Management - minute review (work in progress)
- Income (work in progress)
- Payroll
- Publication
- Town Market (work in progress)
- TIC income - beach huts.

A total of 10 recommendations had been made, the majority in relation to the management of the market; overall one high level recommendation, six medium level recommendations and three low level recommendations had been made. The management response and implementation dates were noted with satisfaction, and it was AGREED:

That the second interim Internal Audit Report for the 2022/23 financial year be accepted.

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

- (a) **Ethical Investments**
- (b) **Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Adoption of revised Publication Scheme**
- (c) **Update on Action Points from Internal Audit Report 2021/22**
- (d) **Tax Base** – it was reported that the tax base for Swanage for 2023/24 had increased by 1.08% to 4935.9.
- (e) **Review of Terminology of Chair/Chairman and Form of Titles on Mayoral Board**

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that full Council had agreed that a further meeting of this Committee should be held in mid-January 2023, prior to the Estimates Meeting on Monday 16th January.

The meeting concluded at 3.00 p.m.
