

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 21st JULY 2021** at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor A. Harris (Mayor) – Chairman.

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor M. Bonfield
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor C. Tomes
Councillor W.S. Trite
Councillor M. Whitwam

Also in attendance: -

Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk
Miss A. Spencer – Finance Manager

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

1. **APOLOGIES**

An apology for her inability to attend the meeting was received from Councillor Foster.

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.

3. **BUDGET REPORT – INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT Q1 2021/22**

Consideration was given to a report setting out the principal sources of the Town Council’s income and expenditure for the 1st quarter of the 2021/22 financial year.

It was reported that at the end of the 1st quarter of the financial year a surplus of £138k had been realised against a budgeted surplus of £52k, a positive variance of £86k. The major contributing factors were above budget income from car parking, the market, beach huts and lower than budgeted employee costs.

It was highlighted that the forecast outturn for the year of a deficit of £82k was liable to change subject to factors such as further variances on variable income sources (e.g. car parking income), the results of a staffing review, the completion of programmed works and the addition of any emergency expenditure that may be required.

The Budget Report and commentary on the Council’s financial activity was received and noted.

4. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT**

A Capital Programme Monitoring Report for the 1st quarter of 2021/22 was submitted for information.

It was noted that two projects had been completed in the 1st quarter, the Festive Lights installation on Shore Road and the additional works to the Chadwick play area. It was further reported that the majority of projects were progressing well, and the Capital Programme Monitoring Report was received and noted.

A request was made for a review of the Council’s planned capital expenditure over the next 5 years to be undertaken, and it was agreed that this was a priority matter.

5. **MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SHCEME REVIEW SURVEY**

Members briefly discussed a consultation paper that had been distributed by DAPTC on behalf of the Dorset Parish Independent Remuneration Panel regarding a review of Parish and Town Council Members' Allowances. It was agreed that the scheme should be flexible enough to recognise the demands of sitting on a larger town council and not be tied to the size of electorate or amount of precept. Completion of the survey was delegated to the Town Clerk.

6. **CIL FUNDS-TO DISCUSS OUTLINE POLICY ON SPENDING**

Members discussed a briefing note that had been distributed regarding the possibility of adopting a policy for the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds, with examples from other Town Councils having been provided.

The question of how the Council should decide which projects should be funded from CIL was discussed and it was noted that projects on the Council's capital programme that fit the expenditure criteria, as dictated by CIL Regulation 59 C, are put forward for CIL funding. It was noted that four projects were currently earmarked for funding from the CIL reserve. Members voiced concern that an adopted Policy would tie the Council's hands in terms of allocating funds to individual projects, and may prove too restrictive. It was agreed that projects should be approved according to need or merit, and that the most appropriate sources of funding should be identified at the relevant time.

Following further discussion, during which Members raised concerns over a bid system for allocating funds, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Tomes and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

To not adopt a CIL Allocation Policy, but to continue allocating funds on a project-by-project basis.

7. **PROCUREMENT- REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATION 11**

The Town Clerk reported that the current Financial Regulations adopted in 2019 contained a threshold for a full tender exercise to be carried out for any works estimated at a cost in excess of £25,000 and for this to be advertised on Contracts Finder. This was adopted following advice from NALC regarding implementation of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the threshold for undertaking a full tender having previously been £60,000.

The Town Clerk stated that guidance had very recently been issued by the Cabinet Office clarifying the transparency requirements for publishing tender opportunities on Contracts Finder. In light of this, and legal advice obtained, it was now clear that the threshold for requiring a full tender exercise can be in excess of £25,000 and consideration could, therefore, be given to increasing the threshold back up to £60,000. It was noted that the £25,000 threshold had proven cumbersome and labour intensive in the procurement related to some smaller projects. If the threshold were raised three quotes would be required for any procurement exercise between £25,000 and £60,000, and that if for any reason a tender was undertaken below £60,000 it would still have to be advertised on Contracts Finder.

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

TO RECOMMEND:

That Section 11 of the Council's Financial Regulations, be amended to increase the contract value for which a full tender exercise must be undertaken to £60,000.

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

Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

- a) James Day Trust
- b) Corporate Plan 2020/21
- c) Ethical Investments
- d) Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Adoption of revised Publication Scheme
- e) Review of Members & Officers Protocol - Members raised the issue of Code of conduct training and a briefing on social media use. It was suggested that all councillors be invited to a workshop to discuss these matters.
- f) Neighbourhood Plan – A question was raised regarding Council's consideration of whether or not to develop a neighbourhood plan. It was noted that a presentation was being arranged by Dorset Council's planning policy team, to be held within the next four to six weeks.

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as 3rd November 2021.

The meeting concluded at 10.30 a.m.
