

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held on the Zoom platform on **TUESDAY, 21st JULY 2020** at 9.30 a.m.

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

Councillor C. Finch (from 9.40 a.m.)

Councillor A. Harris

Councillor G. Suttle (from 9.35 a.m.)

Councillor W.S. Trite

Councillor M. Whitwam

Also in attendance:-

Councillor C. Tomes (from 9.35 a.m.)

Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk

Miss A. Spencer – Finance Manager

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

1. **APOLOGIES**

None.

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 2019/20**

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 2020/21 financial year.

The considerable impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had had on the Council's income was highlighted with car parking and beach hut revenue having been particularly adversely affected.

It was reported that at the end of the 1st quarter of the financial year a deficit of £46k had been realised against a budgeted surplus of £49k, a negative variance of £96k. It was further noted this variance was expected to increase to £385k, with a deficit of £395k on the general fund now being estimated for the full financial year, with a cautious forecast having been made. It was noted that, at the time of writing the report, car parking revenue for July was significantly below budget, however, since the writing of the report the income and usage levels for long stay car parks had returned to the levels expected for July. The difficulty in estimating the out-turn for the full financial year was noted.

It was reported that good progress had been made in moving forward the projects shown in Appendix A to the report. However, it was noted that it may be necessary to curtail expenditure during the financial year given the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. It was further stated that there were three permanent post vacancies, and these may also need to be reviewed given the Council's loss of income and the forecast out-turn.

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

4. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT – UPDATE FOLLOWING STRATEGY MEETING**

An update was given following a remote strategy meeting that had been held with the Council’s Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose, on 22nd May 2020.

It was reported that the Council’s advisors continued to recommend the spreading of credit risk, with money market funds (MMF) preferred to bank deposits and that the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF) should be utilised when needed. It was noted that the Council had a DMADF deposit and continued to use MMFs.

Although the current pandemic had had a negative impact on the capital valuation of the Council’s strategic investments, it was recommended that the Council maintains these investments, and that any short-term fluctuations should smooth out over the longer term. It was noted that income from these investments had not been impacted by the pandemic as much as initially expected, although this may have an impact in the near future.

5. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT**

A Capital Programme Monitoring Report for the 1st quarter of 2020/21 was submitted for information.

It was noted that there were nine projects programmed for the year, with a further three brought forward from 2019/20 and good progress was being made in moving the projects forward. It was further noted that the two play area refurbishment projects, Days Park and the Recreation Ground (from 2019/20) were to be combined in one tender submission.

The estimated cost allocated against the cemetery extension was questioned, with £220k having been submitted in the estimates. It was reported that consultants had been appointed for this project and the likely costs of the project would be known when the tender process was completed.

The Capital Programme Monitoring Report was received and noted.

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

Items of Information

The Town Clerk reported that repairs to the revetment, near the Stone Quay were required as a matter of urgency, with a quote of £14k having been received. An update would be given at the next full Council meeting.

Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

- a) James Day Trust
- b) Review of Grant Policy - Grants to individuals and recurring applications
- c) Corporate Plan 2020/21
- d) Ethical Investments
- e) Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Adoption of revised Publication Scheme
- f) Update on Action Points from Internal Audit Report 2019/20
- g) Reduced rate of VAT - Impact on Beach Hut bookings for 2021/22

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as 3rd November 2020. However, it was stated that an additional meeting may be arranged for late August/early September due to the ongoing pandemic and the financial impact that this may have. The date of any additional meeting date would be confirmed as and when required.

The meeting concluded at 10.05 a.m.
