

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 27th JULY 2022** at 9.30 a.m.

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

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor A. Harris
Councillor C. Moreton
Councillor W.S. Trite
Councillor M. Whitwam

Also in attendance: -

Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk
Miss A. Spencer – Finance Manager
Mrs E. Evans – Management Support Officer

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 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.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

3. **BUDGET REPORT – INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT Q1 2022/23**

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 2022/23 financial year.

It was reported that at the end of the 1st quarter of the financial year a surplus of £98k had been realised against a budgeted surplus of £45k, a positive variance of £53k. The major contributing factors were lower than budgeted employee costs.

It was highlighted that the forecast outturn for the year of a deficit of £108k was liable to change subject to factors such as expenditure at Day's Park in relation to the undermining of the access road and Football Club car park by extensive badger setts and further variances on employee pay.

The Finance Manager provided a Capital Programme monitoring report and highlighted that the payment for the tennis court resurfacing at Beach Gardens had been made in full, as had the payment for the refurbishment of King George's play park. It was noted that numerous capital projects were in progress and it was anticipated that completion of some of the listed projects would fall within the next few months.

The Budget Report and commentary on the Council's financial activity was received and noted and the Finance Manager thanked for her reports.

4. **WEEKLY CHARGE FOR LOWER-LEVEL SHORE ROAD BEACH HUTS**

Consideration was given to a briefing paper, prepared by the Finance Manager, which noted an error in the implementation of the approved weekly charge for lower-level beach hut hire, between 17th September 2022 and 31st March 2023. The price approved at the Council meeting held on 13th September 2021 was £30.00 with the advertised price at £25.00. Due to advance bookings and the production of advertising material stating the lower cost, it was proposed that the Council retrospectively agree a charge of £25.00 per week.

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

TO RECOMMEND:

That a charge of £25.00 per weekly booking of a lower-level Shore Road beach hut, between 17th September 2022 and 31st March 2023, be retrospectively agreed.

5. **DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2022-25**

Further to Minute No. 15 of the Annual Council Meeting held on 23rd May 2022, and discussion at a recent councillor workshop, a draft Corporate Plan had been circulated prior to the meeting. A brief discussion ensued, during which particular consideration was given to whether or not to incorporate a financial summary in the draft document. It was noted that consideration would be given to the production of a Medium Term Financial Strategy document later in the year, and that therefore the question of incorporating financial data in the Corporate Plan should be deferred until consideration was given to its final adoption.

Subject to some minor amendments being made to the wording of the draft plan, it was proposed by Councillor Harris, seconded by Councillor Bishop and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the content of the draft Corporate Plan 2022-25 be approved and issued for public consultation.

6. **REVISED MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' PROTOCOL**

Further to Minute No. 9 of the Meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee, held on 3rd November 2021, Members reviewed a revised draft Members' and Officers' Protocol. A brief discussion was held, during which some minor amendments were suggested to produce a more user-friendly document. It was proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the revised Members' and Officers' Protocol be adopted.

7. **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - AMENDMENT TO SECTION 2**

A briefing paper had been circulated prior to the meeting, introducing a proposed amendment to Section 2 of the Members' Code of Conduct to establish some ground rules for Member-to-Member communication. This had arisen from discussion of the Members' and Officers' Protocol at the Committee Meeting held on 3rd November 2021.

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

TO RECOMMEND:

That the following wording be incorporated in Section 2 of the Members' Code of Conduct, adopted in December 2021:

Attempting to persuade fellow councillors of your point of view is a legitimate part of local democracy and should usually take place in public as part of the debate in Council or a committee. Care should be taken to avoid any impression that decisions are being made privately in advance as a result of behind-the-scenes persuasion. Members are expected to be sensitive to each other's preferences as to how they communicate outside of formal meetings. In particular, if a member expresses a wish not to be contacted by fellow councillors about business due to be coming before the Council or a committee then this should be respected. Unwanted persistent lobbying of a fellow councillor could amount to a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

8. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**
Matters for Forthcoming Agendas

- a) Banking arrangements following scheduled closure of Lloyds Bank Swanage branch - It was reported that the Town Clerk and Finance Manager had met with the Council's relationship manager and that options for banking arrangements following the branch closure in September 2022 were currently being reviewed.
- b) Review of Charitable Trusts – It was noted that a specialist solicitor had been identified to undertake a governance review.
- c) Ethical Investments – A meeting would be held with the Council's Investment Advisors, Arlingclose, on Tuesday 2nd August.
- d) Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Adoption of revised Publication Scheme to be added to a forthcoming agenda.
- e) Review of Council Salary Grades – To consider the financial impact of introducing revised salary scales at a future meeting, further to a referral from the Personnel Committee.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by Councillor Trite, seconded by Councillor Whitwam and
AGREED:-

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 9 and 10 for reasons of legal and commercial confidentiality.

9. **CO-OPERATIVE CAR PARK - UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 7 of the Meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee, held on 16th February 2022, the Finance Manager provided an update in respect of ongoing discussions with The Co-Op regarding the future operation of the store car park. It was noted that further information was anticipated in September.

10. **CAR PARK TICKET MACHINES – POTENTIAL UPGRADE/PROCUREMENT OF NEW MACHINES**

The Finance Manager briefed Members on the need to install 4G modems in the car park Pay & Display machines as a result of the phasing out of 3G. It was noted that the cost would be in the region of £10k and would require budget approval within the current financial year.

In addition to the replacement of the modems, it was reported that due to a review of operational requirements, the procurement of additional Pay & Display machines in the busy, long stay car parks was being investigated. A management report would be issued in due course.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next scheduled meeting was noted as 9th November 2022.

The meeting concluded at 10.35 a.m.
