

Minutes of the Meeting of the **POLICY, FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 7th NOVEMBER 2018** at 2.30 p.m.

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

Councillor J. Bishop
Councillor C. Finch
Councillor G. Green
Councillor A. Harris
Councillor T. Morris
Councillor M. Whitwam

Also in attendance:-

Dr M. Ayres – Town Clerk (until 3.30 p.m.)
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.

The dispensation granted to Councillor Green in respect of cemetery matters was noted.

3. **BUDGET REPORT – INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT AND TREASURY REPORT 2018/19**

Consideration was given to a budget report detailing the Council's income & expenditure for the first half of the financial year, noting any significant variances.

Overall there was a surplus on the general fund of £477k against a budgeted surplus of £285k, resulting in a positive variance of £192k. This was mainly attributable to positive variances in income from the Council's car parks, cemeteries, beach huts and investments. It was further reported that expenditure was lower than budgeted, with employee costs being £75k under spent. The need to assess the status of the expenditure items in Appendix A, One-off Revenue Expenditure, was highlighted. It was agreed that a review of these works would be undertaken by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the Operations Committee, the outcome of which would be considered at relevant meetings as part of the budget setting process for 2019/20.

It was stated that the Council's long-term investments had performed well overall, albeit with a heavy weighting on the Council's CCLA LAMIT property fund. It was further stated that since 30th September 2018 the Council's investment portfolio had changed with an increase in funds being held in two Money Market Funds and a 3 month deposit account with Lloyds.

It was reported that £400k had been received from Wessex Water, following an Enforcement Undertaking and that this donation would be ring-fenced for a specific sea

defence project, with the creation of an earmarked reserve. It was further reported that these funds would be invested in a separately identifiable investment until it needed to be drawn down.

The requirement to utilise funds received through the Communities Infrastructure Levy was noted with the Institute Road project being mooted. It was noted that further discussion would be required as to the utilisation of this reserve.

The Budget Report and Council's financial activity was noted.

The Town Clerk informed Members that a virement was required to finance additional expenditure on some budget headings. Additional budget provision was found to be required for repairs and maintenance costs and employee costs at the Tourist Information Centre with the former due to costs incurred in damp proofing the building. It had been identified that this could be financed with a virement from the Beaches & Foreshore employee costs budget, which was under spent.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Morris, and REESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

To recommend that a virement from the Beaches and Foreshore cost centre budgets for employee costs and seaweed removal be approved to:

- £5k - TIC employee costs
- £4k – TIC repairs and maintenance

The need to formalise arrangements for seaweed clearance for the new financial year was highlighted.

4. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT**

The Capital Programme Monitoring Report was submitted for information. It was noted that five projects brought forward from 2017/18 had been completed. It was further noted that the Fishermen's slipway and huts project was progressing. The Town Clerk informed Members that the tender for the bandstand replacement project would be issued on Friday 9th November 2018.

Attention was drawn to the need to continue the momentum with regards to the capital project led by the football club and it was noted that a meeting would be called in coming weeks in order to progress this matter. It was further noted that the contribution towards the replacement of the roof at the Purbeck Business Centre would most likely be deferred to 2019/20.

The Capital Programme Monitoring Report was noted.

Members were informed of vandalism that had occurred at the King Georges Play Area and Skate Park, with some items having recently been purchased and installed. It was noted that the Town Clerk should arrange a meeting between the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and a Police representative to discuss vandalism.

5. **BUDGET SETTING 2019/20 – AGREEMENT OF BUDGET PRINCIPLES.**

The Finance Manager outlined draft budget setting principles for 2019/20 and the subsequent two years. It was noted that these would be used to prepare the draft 2019/20 estimates for consideration at the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee meeting to be held on 12th December.

It was proposed by Councillor Morris, seconded by Councillor Bishop, and AGREED:-

That the budget setting principles for 2019/20 be approved.

6. **PROCUREMENT OF TABLET COMPUTERS FOR TRIAL USAGE BY COUNCILLORS & STAFF**

A proposal was put forward for Members to trial the usage of tablets/laptop computers to receive agendas and working papers, in lieu of paper copies and to utilise the IT equipment in meetings. It was noted that presently both soft and hard copies were being distributed.

It was stated that this would emulate the District Council's procedures for the distribution of working papers. However, concern was raised as to security issues and the lack of an IT department in order to provide training and back up for Members. It was mooted that IT Officers from Purbeck District Council may be able to attend and give an overview of the method of adopting IT and give estimated costs. It was suggested that the unwillingness to adopt this approach by some Members was a training issue. It was further stated that a new Council in May 2019 may adopt a different approach to working with IT.

It was agreed that this matter should be the subject of further informal discussion at the Councillor briefing to be held on 26th November 2018.

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

Councillor Bishop requested that a meeting of the recently constituted Working Party to discuss a Grants and Donations Policy should be convened.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Morris, 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 8, 9 and 10 (in relation to legal and financial matters).

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

An updated schedule of Council Priorities and Projects was submitted for information, including updates on ongoing legal matters. It was noted that two capital projects and one lease agreement had been finalised since the previous report was issued.

9. **INSURANCE-CLAIMS UPDATE**

Members were updated on two cases that had an "open" status on the insurance file.

It was noted that a previously reported public liability claim brought against the Council was heard at the County Court in October 2018 and that the case had been dismissed.

10. **AGED DEBTORS REPORT**

An aged debtors report as at 30th September 2018 was submitted. It was reported that there was only one debtor of any concern, and that under the Council's Financial Regulations, this sum of £25.00 was within the remit of the Town Clerk to write off. The account for write off was noted.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Performance Management Committee was scheduled to be held at 12.00 noon on Wednesday 12th December 2018.

The meeting concluded at 3.40 p.m.
