



## Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017

### Present

**Councillors:** Sanham (Chairman), Beer, Burrows, and Squire

**In attendance:** Town Clerk

### **65. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Chadwick, Pigott, Read and Rowland.

### **66. Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Burrows declared a Personal Interest as an East Devon District Council (EDDC) Councillor.

### **67. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017, subject to the first bullet point on minute 58 being amended to read 'Salaries and whether current allocation is sufficient'.

(Moved Cllr Squire; seconded Cllr Burrows)

### **68. Public question time.**

There were no members of the public present.

### **69. Payments and Receipts and SAGE report**

#### Payments

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the payments to date for the 2017/18 financial year.

(moved Cllr Beer; seconded Cllr Squire)

#### Receipts

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the receipts to date for the 2017/18 financial year.

(moved Cllr Beer; seconded Cllr Squire)

It was noted that the SAGE report would come to the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

#### **70. Petty Cash expenditure.**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the petty cash check sheet as at the start of October 2017.

(moved Cllr Sanham; seconded Cllr Beer)

#### **71. Budget to date**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the Budget to date for the 2017/18 financial year (moved Cllr Beer; seconded Cllr Squire)

#### **72. Bank Reconciliation**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliation as at the 31/09/17 (moved Cllr Squire; seconded Cllr Burrows)

#### **73. Risk Assessment**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to ask the Town Clerk to update the remaining part of the risk assessment and to return the completed risk assessment to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (moved Cllr Sanham; seconded Cllr Squire)

#### **74. Five Year Budget**

The Committee considered the first draft of the 5 year budget covering the period of 2018/19 to 2022/23.

Discussion took place around the following:

##### Income

- Allotments – Cllr Squire to look at the allotments actual income, spend and budget in more detail and to discuss with the Town Clerk;
- More work to be done to estimate the likely income from the Artisan Markets and Cycle Festival

##### Expenditure

- The Personnel Committee to discuss the budget related to staff costs. It was agreed that a separate budget heading for staffing be set up for 2018/19 onwards
- Code 104 – Travel be amended to £200.00 for each year and code 204 Councillor expenses be set at zero
- The budget for postage (108) be reduced to £350 per annum to recognise that the Council is endeavouring to send most things by email rather than by post
- Code 112 – website contract: any underspend at the year end to be carried forward to an Ear Marked Reserve (EMR)
- Code 120 – Legal & Professional Fees: any underspend at the year end to be carried forward to an EMR
- Code 2012 photocopies was adjusted to £500;
- Code 2103 – Computer/IT: any underspend at the year end to be carried forward to an EMR and a budget of £500 per annum be set
- Code 602 – PPE, H&S, etc: any underspend at the year end to be carried forward to 2018/19
- Code 603 – storage rental: a 3% increase year on year has been factored into the budget to account for inflation

- Code 606 – Bus Shelter refurbishment: any underspend at the year end to be carried forward into an EMR
- Code 608 – Street furniture and maintenance: any underspend at the year end to be carried forward into an EMR
- Code 609 – general maintenance: any underspend at the year end to be carried forward to 2018/19. A 3% increase year on year has been factored into the budget to account for inflation
- Code 2059 – training for the Amenities staff to be considered by the Personnel Committee
- Code 2070 – vehicle: consideration needs to be given to the likely remaining life span of the Council vehicle and whether an amount needs to be put into an EMR each year to cover replacement
- Code 2099 – Town Hall: it was agreed that the Estates Committee consider whether the budget of £8,000 is sensible or whether it can realistically be reduced to £6,000
- Code 2154 – Insurance: The budget has been increased year on year to account for any price increases. The insurance contract to be next considered in January/February 2018 and that all Council assets be listed separately in the policy going forward.
- Codes 1301, 804, 1101, 1001, 903 and 2021 – Annual Grounds Maintenance Contract: prices fixed until the end of 19/20. A 10% price increase has been factored in for the next contract
- Code 602 – Cleaning & refuse: the Town Clerk to look into what the £756 was spent on in the 16/17 financial year
- Code 1305 – Misc works: any underspend to be carried forward to 2018/19
- Code 1306 – Labyrinth maintenance: any underspend to be carried forward into an EMR
- Code 805 – Litter bins: any underspend to be carried forward to 2018/19 the provision of litter bins at Elizabeth Road to be investigated
- Code 1102 – PP3 footpath maintenance: any underspend to be carried forward into an EMR
- Code 206 – elections: any underspend to be carried forward into an EMR
- Codes 2134, 2141, 2143, 2144, 2147 – agreed with the recommendations made by the Estates Committee that any underspend on these codes be carried forward into EMRs
- Code 2118 – Gateway signs: The committee felt that the £1,600 requested by Cllr Rowland to have another gateway sign on Seaton Down Hill be removed from the budget
- Code 1202 – Competition Costs for Seaton in Bloom: it was felt that the Communities Committee should look into the cost of South West in Bloom and the cost of upgrading the planters
- Code 2117 – Art projects: that any underspend be carried forward into an EMR
- Code 2119 – Town signage: that any underspend be carried forward into an EMR

The Committee **RESOLVED** to set up a separate staffing cost centre for 2018/19 onwards and all relevant staffing items from Administration, Amenities and Town Development to be included under this budget heading.

(Moved Cllr Squire; seconded Cllr Beer)

The Committee **RESOLVED** to remove the amount of £1,600 from budget code 2118 for 2018/19

(moved Cllr Squire; seconded Cllr Burrows)

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Communities Committee be asked to look into the costs of entering South West in Bloom and of upgrading the planters.

(moved Cllr Sanham; seconded Cllr Squire)

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the draft 5 year budget be noted and that it be brought back to the Committee once the matters above had been resolved.

(moved Cllr Sanham; seconded Cllr Beer)

### **75. Internal Audit Progress Report**

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the progress made against the Internal Auditors report.

This included confirmation that:

- Risk assessment software had been purchased and risks are being considered by the Finance Committee
- The Bank reconciliation is now being completed monthly, is presented to the Finance Committee and is signed off by the Chairman of the Finance Committee
- Petty cash is being checked on a monthly basis, reported to the Finance Committee and being signed off by the Chairman of the Finance Committee
- The issues raised in respect of the finance system are to be addressed as part of agenda item 15
- Work is being done on the asset register for 2017/18
- VAT returns are being completed on a quarterly basis in the week following the end of the previous quarter

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the progress report in terms of the Internal Auditors report

(moved Cllr Burrows; seconded Cllr Squire)

### **76. External Auditors Report**

The Town Clerk updated the Committee that the External Auditors report had been factually incorrect in a number of places when it was received. She confirmed that she had contacted Grant Thornton and sent them evidence in respect of the incorrect areas. Grant Thornton had agreed to amend the report but that the report hadn't arrived in time for the Committee meeting. The Town Clerk confirmed that the revised report would be circulated to Councillors when it was received.

The Committee noted the update from the Town Clerk

### **77. Future External Audit Provision**

The Town Clerk gave the Committee a verbal update that Grant Thornton were no longer the External Auditor for the Council from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. The contract had recently been awarded to PKF Littlejohn and they will write to the Council in due course. The Committee noted the update from the Town Clerk.

### **78. Confidential Items**

Cllr Sanham moved, and the Committee **RESOLVED** that in accordance with the Council's Standing orders the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of agenda items 5 to 7 as there was likely to be disclosure of confidential information as matters were being discussed that could be commercially sensitive.

### **79. Finance System**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Council look to update its computer systems and to purchase a new financial system, to go live for the new financial year, from RBS subject to the details discussed by the Committee.

(moved Cllr Sanham; seconded Cllr Beer)

### **80. Energy Provision for Marshlands**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that:

- a) they enter into a one-year deal with British Gas for gas and electricity provision;
- b) pay by direct debit to gain additional discounts; and
- c) Market test the cost of electricity and gas prior to the end of the contract with British Gas.

(moved Cllr Sanham; seconded Cllr Squire)

### **81. Update on Actions arising from previous meetings (for information)**

- a) Benchmarking re the photocopier – The Town Clerk confirmed that she has contacted the current supplier and a number of other suppliers. An update to come back to the Committee at the next meeting.
- b) PAT Testing – The Town Clerk confirmed that PAT testing is due to be completed on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October.
- c) Air Ambulance Night Time Landing Strip – Cllr Martin Pigott to provide an update at the next Committee meeting
- d) Annual Fire Risk Assessment – The Town Clerk has had an initial meeting with the supplier doing the fire risk assessment. He will return and complete the risk assessment in the next two weeks
- e) DALC training for chairman and chairs of committees – The Town Clerk is liaising with DALC on possible dates for training
- f) Water bill for the Pavilion – The Town Clerk has chased South West Water Business to get this matter resolved and has now raised this as a formal complaint with them
- g) Information on the Council website re reporting problems relating to grass cutting or vandalism – This information to be added to the 'links' section
- h) Review of Council's computer system – paper to be brought to the next meeting outlining options
- i) Previous maintenance of Labyrinth – Town Clerk to continue searching for the information regarding the individual who produced a report on the Labyrinth a

few years ago and to contact the individual to ask them to produce a report on the Labyrinth and works needed

- j) Footpaths & footpath wardens – Town Clerk to check as to which of the Footpath Wardens are continuing and if returns have been completed for 2017
- k) Play area inspections – the new Town Maintenance Person is attending the routine play area inspection course on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> October.

**The meeting closed at 22:15 pm**

**Chairman**

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**Date**

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