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Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee held in Community House, Meridian Centre at 7.35pm on Tuesday 23rd April 2019

Present – Cllr Robbie Robertson (Meeting Chair), Cllr Lynda Duhigg, Cllr Ann Harrison, Cllr Rachael Coles, Cllr Claude Cheta, Cllr Sue Griffiths, Cllr Ian Buchanan, A/Town Clerk Tony Allen, A/RFO Andy Beams.

PF338 CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the Councillors and staff for their support. It was noted with sadness that the editor and publisher of the Council's E-News, Mr Christopher Chandler, had recently suddenly passed away.

PF339 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Mr Seabrook asked why the public papers for this meeting had not been posted on the Council's web site along with the Agenda. The Chairman stated that a response in writing will be provided.

Mr Edmunds asked about the Council's strategy for recovering its financial reserves to an acceptable level. The A/RFO explained that, despite the higher than average increase in precept, the current budget was not designed to claw back any reserves, noting that, whilst this is good practice, it was not a legal requirement. The A/RFO noted that the current budget had taken the Council out of deficit and balanced its accounts and that it is for the 'new' Council to consider reserve levels going forward.

Mr Seed noted that, at the January 2019 meeting of Council, it was agreed that the Council would go paperless. The Chairman stated that a response in writing will be provided.

PF340 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies had been received from Cllr Harrison-Hicks (Ill health), Cllr Harris (medical matter) and Cllr Simmons (Ill health).

PF341 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interests.

PF342 TO APPROVE & SIGN THE NON CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF 15th JANUARY 2019, CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF 22nd MARCH 2019 & CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF 5th APRIL 2019

The minutes of the meetings of the 15th January 2019 and the 5th April 2019 were amended to record Cllr Buchanan's apologies for absence. **It was resolved** to adopt these minutes, as amended, as a true record.

PF343 MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES (Not elsewhere on the Agenda)

No matters were raised.

PF344 CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLORS

It was resolved that the Council should be asked to adopt an updated policy for the co-option of Councillors. **ACTION:** A/Town Clerk to review the Council's current policy in line with the SSALC model policy.

PF345 REVIEW UPDATED CODE OF CONDUCT (FOR REVIEW AT ANNUAL MEETING)

The paper and draft Code produced by the A/RFO were noted and discussed. **It was resolved** to put the updated Members' Code-of-Conduct, as drafted by the A/RFO, to the Annual meeting of Council for adoption.

PF346 REVIEW OF INSURANCE QUOTES AND SELECT PROVIDER FOR NEXT YEAR

The paper produced by the A/RFO was noted and discussed. **It was resolved** to secure a three-year insurance policy with the Council's current provider, at a fixed cost of £9476.04 p.a.

PF347 NOTE YEAR END UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS

The paper and financial reports produced by the A/RFO were discussed. The Council's year-end position and audit dates were noted.

Councillors thanked the A/RFO for his hard work in starting to bring the Council's accounts back into line, noting that it was a shame that expenditure had been underestimated in the past.

The A/RFO answered specific questions relating to some of the budget headings and gave a report on clearance of outstanding debt.

PF348 CIL REPORT

The paper produced by the A/RFO was noted and discussed. **It was resolved** to transfer the amount of £15357.75 to the CIL earmarked reserve for use on future agreed infrastructure projects. **It was resolved** that the general principle for future years should be to transfer any CIL receipts received to the CIL earmarked reserve, at the end of each financial year.

PF349 REVISION OF COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES STRUCTURE

The paper produced by the A/Town Clerk was noted and discussed. **It was resolved** to propose that Council adopts the following revised Committee structure:-

- Full Council.
- Planning & Highways Committee.
- Policy & Finance Committee.
- Leisure, Amenities & Environment Committee.
- Personnel Committee.
- Civic & Events Committee.

It was resolved that the A/Town Clerk should produce draft Terms of Reference to give delegated authority to Committees.

PF350 REPAIRS TO THE HUB BUILDING

It was noted that repairs and improvements are required to the roof, boilers, access and security at The Hub. The A/Town Clerk stated that one quote had been received for roof repairs. **ACTION:** A/Town Clerk to obtain quotes for all repairs in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

PF351 UPDATES TO THE TOWN MAYORS HANDBOOK

A number of proposed amendments to the Mayor's Handbook were discussed and agreed. **It was resolved** that the updated Mayor's Handbook, as amended, be recommended for adoption by Council at its Annual Meeting.

ACTION: A/RFO to produce an updated version.

PF352 UPDATES TO STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The paper and draft Orders produced by the A/RFO and related matters were noted and discussed in detail.

It was resolved that the updated Standing Orders, as amended, be recommended for adoption by Council at its Annual Meeting.

ACTION: A/RFO to produce an updated version.

It was resolved that the Council should be asked to adopt an updated policy for dealing with the press. **ACTION:** A/Town Clerk to review the Council's current policy in line with the SSALC model policy.

It was resolved that in accordance with Standing Order No. 11 and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the discussion on following items:

PF353 UPDATE OF CURRENT EMPLOYMENT/STAFFING MATTERS

No matters were brought forward for discussion.

PF354 AGED DEBT ANALYSIS

The paper produced by the A/RFO was noted and discussed and resolutions made for the Annual Meeting of Council.

The Chairman thanked the A/RFO for this and the other detailed reports that he had produced for the meeting.

PF355 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 28th MAY at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21:18

