

Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE held in the Anzac Room, Community House, Meridian Centre, Peacehaven on Tuesday 18th February 2020 at 7.30pm

Present - Cllr C Collier (Chair of Committee), Cllr L Duhigg (Vice-Chair of Committee), Cllr C Cheta, Cllr A Goble, Cllr S Griffiths, Cllr D Seabrook, Cllr I Sharkey, Cllr A Milliner, Cllr C Gallagher. Town Clerk T Allen, Finance Officer A Beams, Finance Administrator Z Malone. A member of the public.

PF453 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and read out the safety and housekeeping announcements.

PF454 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

One member of the public was present to observe the meeting.

PF455 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were accepted from Cllr J Harris.

PF456 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interests made.

PF457 TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF 10th DECEMBER 2019

It was resolved to adopt the minutes as a true record.

PF458 TO REVIEW THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL YEAR TO-DATE

The circulated financial reports and statements were received and discussed.

The Chairman noted a continuing overall improvement in the Council's financial position, with the possibility of a small contribution to general reserves by the end of the financial year.

The Chairman signed the Bank Reconciliation.

It was resolved to approve the list of payments. Finance Assistant to investigate the recording of a payment dated 07/10/2019, for Castle Water, in the amount of £1324.30.

PF459 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOR 2019/20

The Finance Officer reported on this recent audit.

It was resolved that the 'Points Forward' report from the audit should be used as an action plan to enable the Committee to monitor progress on addressing the areas raised by the Auditor.

It was resolved to approve the Internal Audit Report for 2019/20.

PF460 TO APPROVE THE ACQUISITION OF A TOWN COUNCIL CORPORATE CREDIT CARD

The Finance Officer reported on the background to this item and highlighted the controls contained in the Council's Standing Orders and the VAT reclaim benefits.

It was resolved that a credit card should be acquired. Finance Assistant to report on current fees for this new account.

PF461 TO REVIEW THE AGE UK GRANT AWARDED FOR 2019/20

Cllr Griffiths related the background to this item, noting the recent change in circumstances relating to a withdrawn Age UK service at Kempton House and Age UK operations in the Town generally.

It was resolved that the grant allocated to Age UK for 2019/20 should not be paid and that a new request should be made for the 2020/21 grants round, if required.

PF462 REVIEW OF CTLA GRANT AWARDED FOR 2019/20

Cllr Griffiths related the background to this item, noting that additional funding from CIL monies had been intended to support a proposed car scheme, but this had not materialized.

It was noticed that this intention had not been reflected in the relevant meeting minutes, nor in correspondence between the previous Town Manager and CTLA. A recent email from CTLA stated that it was not aware of this either.

It was resolved to arrange a meeting with CTLA to discuss the matter further and the setting up of an SLA. Cllr Paul, being the Council's CTLA representative, to be included in this meeting.

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PF463 UPGRADE OF THE BROADBAND SERVICE TO THE GATEWAY CAFÉ FOR CCTV

Cllr Seabrook related the background to this item. It was noted that the upgrade would allow real-time CCTV monitoring which would help to improve the safety of the public and staff, as well as allowing improved monitoring and reporting of incidents to Sussex Police.

It was noted that S.106 monies could only be used for initial set-up/installation costs, not ongoing monthly payments.

It was noted that no specific budget had been allocated for this upgrade and that therefore the costs would effectively come from general reserves.

It was resolved by majority to go ahead with this upgrade.

PF464 TO APPROVE A NEW LEASE FOR PTFC & THE CATS CLUB

The Clerk related the background to this item. It was noted that PTFC required a new/longer Lease to access funding, particularly to meet the requirements of the FA.

It was noted that the CATS Club operation could be subsumed into a new arrangement with PTFC as part of a new Lease. The Clerk reported that there was no evidence that the Council had ever produced a Lease for the CATS Club, although one had been promised.

Cllr Collier questioned the payment of the Solicitor's costs for producing the required new Lease(s), noting that the Council had no budget allocation for this expenditure.

It was resolved that the Committee required a more detailed report in order to progress this matter further, including full information concerning Council's income and expenditure for PTFC and the CATS Club. It was noted that ultimately any decision would have to be ratified by Council.

PF465 TO APPROVE THE REPAIR OF THE GATEWAY CAFÉ SHUTTERS

Cllr Collier noted that there was no budgetary provision for these repair works. Cllr Griffiths stated that the cost could be met from the Big Park S.106 monies for maintenance; Finance Administrator to confirm this at a forthcoming meeting with Chris Bibb.

It was resolved to proceed with these repairs, subject to confirmation from Chris Bibb re. the use of S.106 monies.

It was noted that Council could be asked to vire funds from unused budget allocations to allow this work to proceed as soon as possible.

PF466 TO APPROVE FUNDING FOR THE COUNCIL'S TREE SURVEY

Cllr Griffiths related the background to this item. It was resolved to proceed with the company recommended in the Parks Officer's report, with funding from the budget heading proposed.

NOTE: In accordance with Standing Order No. 3(d) and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, in view of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted, the public and press were excluded from the rest of the meeting.

PF467 AGED DEBT ANALYSIS

The Finance Officer reported on an improving situation and measures being put in place to address this issue at source.

Finance Administrator to provide an analysis of risk for the Committee's next meeting.

PF468 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 10th March 2020 at 7.30pm

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:41.