**Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE held on-line (Zoom) on Monday 18th January 2021 at 7.30pm**

**Present** - Cllr C Collier (Chair of Committee), Cllr A Milliner, Cllr A Goble, Cllr S Griffiths, Cllr D Seabrook, Cllr I Sharkey, Cllr C Gallagher.

Town Clerk T Allen, Finance Officer Z Malone, Parks Officer K Bray.

**PF567 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**PF568 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

No members of the public were present.

**PF569 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS**

All Members were present.

**PF570 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

There were no declarations of interests.

**PF571 TO ADOPT THE PUBLIC MINUTES OF 17th November 2020**

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

**PF572 TO REVIEW THE 2020/21FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL YEAR TO-DATE: -**

1. **Finance Officer’s report**

Received and noted.

The Finance Officer reported that the Council’s finances were in a good position in moving from Q3 to Q4 and that, following the engagement of the SPO, S.106 & CIL matters were now controlled and contributing to some required expenditure.

1. **Bank account summary**

Received and noted.

1. **Bank Reconciliation statements (for signing)**

Received and resolved to sign.

Finance Officer to deal with unpresented cheques for Seahaven Fibromyalgia and for David Simpson.

1. **Income & Expenditure report**

The Finance Officer’s reports were received and noted.

The Chairman reported on the following points:-

* Improved approach to accounting management.
* The ‘managed by trend’ accounting review approach used for Q1 & Q2, using profiling methods based on loss of income forecasts.
* Budget savings from enforced homeworking.
* Budget savings from closing down buildings and some services, balancing to a great extent the loss of income.
* Improvements in general reserves.
* A less risk averse approach to providing services.
* Sales Ledger of £17k equaling a 2.47% total equity.
* Next meeting to look at Earmarked Reserves and related works going forward.

1. **Balance Sheet**

Received and noted.

1. **CIL & S.106 report**

Received and noted.

The Clerk noted the much-improved control and understanding of the CIL & S.106 monies, as evidenced by the SPO’s submitted reports.

1. **List of payments (for approval)**

It was resolved to approve the November and December 2020 payments amounting to £131,269.88, as scheduled in the meeting papers.

1. **Review of external contracts & their ongoing authorisations.**

The Clerk reported that an NDP grant had been obtained from Locality to cover the costs for L&N Consulting until the end of March 2021.

**PF573 TO FINALISE THE 2021/22 DRAFT BUDGET & PRECEPT REQUIREMENT**

The Draft Budget was received and discussed. The Chairman reported on the following points:-

* The background to producing the Draft Budget and the processes used.
* Personal meetings with the Chairman, the Finance Officer, other Officers & Councillors and Committee discussions over the last few months had taken place in order to construct the Draft Budget.
* The Draft Budget resulted in no year-on-year increase to the Precept requirement.
* A realistic approach in setting the budget had allowed the continuation and improvement of providing public services to be preeminent.
* Increased use of S.106, CIL & Capital expenditure programmes.
* An increase in rent and hire charges of 2% had been assumed to keep pace with RPI & cost of living increases.

Cllr Seabrook reported on the construction of the Draft Personnel Committee Budget, noting the following points:-

* There are currently no staff vacancies.
* The Draft Budget includes provision for additional working hours for some staff.
* The Draft Budget includes allowances for staff pay increments and cost-of-living increases.
* The issue of working from home allowances needs to be considered in due course.
* Overall, the Personnel Committee’s Draft Budget means only a very slight increase over the current year’s Budget.

It was resolved to present the Draft Budget of £820,749 and Precept requirement of £640,705 to Council for approval.

**PF574 TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REFERRALS FROM THE LEISURE AMENITIES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE:-**

1. **To approve the use of PTC CIL monies for a new gate and bollards at Centenary Park.**

The circulated report was noted and discussed.

It was resolved to approve the use of PTC CIL monies amounting to £1,356 for this purpose and for the Grounds Team to commence these works a.s.a.p.

1. **To approve the use of PTC CIL monies for Epinay Park play area retaining wall works.**
2. **To approve the use of PTC CIL monies for The Dell play area retaining wall & sand pit works.**

The circulated report was noted and discussed.

The Clerk detailed the quotes received from three companies for these works.

It was resolved to approve the use of PTC CIL monies amounting to £19,953 (£4,100 + £15,853) for these purposes and that Barcombe Landscapes should be appointed to carry out both the Epinay Park and The Dell play areas works, as its quotes represented the best value for money.

Parks Officer to proceed and agree the details of these works with Barcombe Landscapes and their commencement.

1. **To approve the use of PTC Capital Reserves for the purchase of a shredder.**

The circulated report was noted and discussed. The Chairman thanked Cllr Seabrook for the detailed report on the environmental factors of this case.

It was noted that S.106 monies had subsequently been approved for the purchase of the shredder.

It was resolved to proceed with the purchase of the shredder, as detailed in the report, to be funded initially from Capital Reserves, until the S.106 monies are forthcoming.

**PF575 TO APPROVE AN UPDATE TO THE GRANTS APPLICATION FORM & PROCESS**

Cllr Seabrook reported on the revised form and process. It was resolved that these documents should be adopted.

**PF576 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SLA’S WITH CTLA & WCAB**

The recent correspondence on this matter was noted.

The Clerk reported that he is in ongoing dialogue with both organisations, with the aim of having both SLA’s in place by the beginning of the new financial year.

**PF577 TO REVIEW & UPDATE THE COMMITTEE’S INPUT TO THE PTC INTERNAL BUSINESS PLAN**

The Committee’s section of the Internal Business Plan (IBP) was noted and discussed.

Cllr Gallagher noted that this was a developing document which will be informed by the experience of the SPO.

Cllr Seabrook noted that the development/enhancement of Community House was a large long-term project that needed to be included in the IBP.

More detailed discussions to take place at the Committee’s next meeting.

**PF578 TO REVIEW AND ADOPT A CIL APPLICATION PROCESS**

The Clerk’s circulated document was noted and discussed.

Clerk to develop the document in relation to defining the term ‘small bids’ and defining when the CIL WP should be convened.

(The Parks Officer left the meeting)

***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 are excluded from the rest of the meeting.*

**PF579 TO ADOPT THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF 17th November 2020**

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

**PF580 AGED DEBT ANALYSIS**

The Chairman noted that the Sales Ledger of £17k equaling a 2.47% total equity showed a continuing improvement.

The Finance Officer reported that, despite a reduction in the number of invoices being issued, chasing for payments continues, albeit very sensitively in the current circumstances.

The details and situation of a number of debtors was discussed and actions agreed.

**PF581 TO REVIEW LESSEES/HIRERS STATEMENT OF CREDITS/DEBITS & ONGOING SUPPORT**

Ongoing support, agreed at the Committee’s last meeting, would continue; to be reviewed further at the Committee’s next meeting.

**PF582 TO AGREE AN INCREASE IN THE WORKING HOURS FOR THE SENIOR PROJECTS OFFICER**

The Clerk’s report was noted and discussed.

It was resolved to increase the SPO’s contracted working hours, with effect from 1st January 2021.

**PF583 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 7.30pm**

*There being no further business, the meeting closed at 20:53.*