**Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE held on Tuesday 18th January 2022 at 7.30pm in Community House**

**Present** – Cllr C Collier (Chair), Cllr R White, Cllr S Griffiths, Cllr D Seabrook, Cllr C Gallagher.

Town Clerk T Allen; Finance Officer Z Malone.

**PF708 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and covered the housekeeping matters.

Cllr Gallagher stated that she would be recording the meeting.

**PF709 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**PF710 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies from Cllr I Sharkey, Cllr C Cheta, Cllr A Milliner, Cllr G Hill and Cllr A Goble were approved.

It was resolved that Cllr White substitutes for Cllr Goble.

**PF711 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

There were no declarations of interests.

**PF712 TO ADOPT THE PUBLIC MINUTES OF 7th DECEMBER 2021**

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

**PF713 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 she had been working on end-of-year budget projections and that these currently showed a contribution to general reserves of c. £40K, assuming no further unexpected expenditure.

The Chairman noted that the Council’s finances were as expected at this point in the financial year.

1. **Bank account summary**

Received and noted.

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

Received and approved for signing.

1. **Income & Expenditure report**

Received and noted.

1. **Balance Sheet**

Received and noted.

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

Received and noted.

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

It was resolved to approve the December 2021 payments amounting to £60,286.97 as scheduled in the meeting papers.

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

No items for discussion.

1. **Funding report for buildings equipment maintenance works.**

Received and noted.

**PF714 TO DISCUSS THE & AGREE THE 2022/23 BUDGET & PRECEPT REQUIREMENT FOR**

**PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL**

The Draft 2022/23 budget was reviewed in detail.

It was resolved to make the following changes:-

* To move 4164/330 (trade refuse) from LAE to 4164/200 under Planning & Highways.
* To amend the name of EMR 357 from Pavilion Roof & Boiler to HUB Improvements.
* To rebadge the Climate Change EMR of £5K from CO2 survey purpose to a general expenditure purpose.
* The approval of £10,000 to be moved from general reserves to a vehicles reserve.

The Finance Officer stated that an allowance had been made in the new budget for expected increases in energy costs.

The Chairman noted that the proposed budget included some contingency and was a good budget for Council to approve, representing a 4.9% Band D equivalent increase.

It was resolved to recommend a budget of £687,081 for 2022/23 to Council for adoption.

The Finance Officer was thanked for her hard work in preparing the new budget.

**PF715 TO DISCUSS THE COMMITTEE’S ACTION PLAN AND AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTION**

Fields & Robson Rooms - The Clerk reported that feedback from Estate and Lettings Agents was that there was not much demand for such space and that a suitable rent is in the region of £800 p.c.m.

Other possible uses for these rooms were discussed, including moving the staff office into them.

It was agreed to conduct a site visit prior to the Committee’s next meeting.

Hearing Loops – The Clerk reported that the agreed repairs were in-hand.

Community House Surveys – The Clerk reported that he was chasing the initial reports and costings,

Energy Survey/Community Energy Scheme – Cllr Gallagher noted that this action was an extension of matters being covered within the Business Development Committee and all that is required is for the Clerk to authorise Dr Mark Earthey (CEO Maitland Energy Consulting Ltd) and Mr Chris Rowland (Director & CEO OVESCO) to proceed with the survey of The Hub, Gateway Café, Bowls Club and Football Club.

It was agreed that this matter should proceed and remain within the Business Development Committee.

**PF716 TO DISCUSS & AGREE THE CIL EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST TO LDC & SDNPA**

Cllr White and Cllr Gallagher reported on the EOI for a cycle way from the Big Park to the Meridian Centre.

Several aspects of this project were discussed, along with the need to consult with SDNPA, Andy Frost (LDC) and Chris Bibb (ESCC).

Cllr Griffiths expressed concerns regarding any commitment to PTC CIL matched funding at this stage.

The Chairman stated that the proposed EOI did not imply any commitments and that all details will be dealt with if the application is successful.

It was resolved to make this CIL EOI application to LDC as drafted.

The Clerk reported that Cllr White and Mrs Donovan had been working on an EOI for a meridian line, South Downs way walk, which had now been submitted.

The Clerk Confirmed that he will be submitting the Howard Peace Park Accessibility Project EOI to LDC.

It was noted that Cllr Symonds is to send and EOI to LDC for the upgrading of CCTV in the Big Park.

***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.***

**PF717 TO ADOPT THE CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF 7th DECEMBER 2021**

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

**PF718 AGED DEBT ANALYSIS**

The Finance Officer’s report was received and noted.

**PF719 TO APPROVE 2021/22 WRITE-OFFS**

The Finance Officer’s report was received and discussed.

It was agreed to write off the outstanding debt, as tabled in the meeting papers.

**PF720 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 1st March 2022 at 7.30pm**

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