**DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee held in the Anzac Room, Community House on Tuesday 12th December 2023 at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllr Sue Griffiths (Chair), Cllr Mary Campbell (Vice-Chair), Cllr David Seabrook (Chair of Council), Cllr Isobel Sharkey (Vice-Chair of Council), Cllr Wendy Veck, Cllr Cathy Gallagher, Cllr Debbie Donovan, Cllr Claude Cheta, Cllr Kiera Gordon-Garrett (non-voting).

**Officers**: George Dyson (Town Clerk), Zoe Malone (Responsible Financial Officer).

No members of the public were in attendance.

1. **PF939** CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:30, welcomed everyone and informed the Committee that Bingo is tomorrow (13th December) 2 – 4pm, and that the Christmas Afternoon Tea is next Wednesday (20th December).

1. **PF940** PUBLIC QUESTIONS - *There will be a 15-minute period whereby members of the public may ask questions on any relevant POLICY & FINANCE matters.*

There were no public questions.

1. **PF941** TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS.

There were no apologies or substitutions.

1. PF942 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

There were no declarations of interest.

1. **PF943** TO ADOPT THE COMMITTEE’S MINUTES OF 24TH OCTOBER 2023

**Proposed by:** Cllr Seabrook **Seconded by:** Cllr Sharkey

The minutes of the meeting of 24th October 2023 were **agreed** and **adopted.**

1. **PF944** TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY HOUSE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING OF 16TH OCTOBER 2023.

Cllr Gallagher raised a query over the remit of the sub-committee, which the Clerk responded to.

Cllr Donovan highlighted the important decisions being made at the sub-committee and that she felt more Councillors should have involvement with it. Cllr Seabrook responded that there will be an opportunity at Full Council to review Committee membership if more people would like to join it.

The Clerk clarified that the agenda item is to receive the minutes as a true record of the meeting, not to challenge the decisions of the Committee unless it is considered that the minutes are inaccurate.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Griffiths **Seconded by:** Cllr Veck

The minutes of the meeting of the Community House sub-committee of 16th October were **agreed** and **adopted**.

1. **PF945** TO NOTE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY HOUSE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING OF 20TH NOVEMBER 2023.

The Committee **noted** the draft minutes.

1. **PF946** TO REVIEW THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL YEAR TO-DATE: -
2. Finance Officer’s report.
3. Bank account & Bank Reconciliation statements (for signing).
4. Income & Expenditure report.
5. Balance Sheet.
6. CIL & S.106 report (income, expenditure & bids).
7. List of payments (for approval).
8. Review of external contracts, SLA’s & their ongoing authorization.
9. Funding report for buildings equipment maintenance works.

The RFO explained the reasons behind the large payment being made relating to service charges and another question about the columns presented on the balance sheet.

It was proposed that the Committee sign the bank account and bank reconciliation statements, and approve the list of payments.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Gallagher **Seconded by:** Cllr Campbell

The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

1. **PF947** TO DISCUSS THE COMMITTEE’S ACTION PLAN AND AGREE ANY FURTHER ACTION.

The Committee **noted** the Action Plan.

1. **PF948** TO AGREE THE 2024 ALLOTMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Cllr Campbell raised a query about the surface of the 2’ gap around the boundaries which Cllr Gallagher and the Clerk clarified.

It was proposed that the Committee **adopt** the 2024 allotment terms and conditions as read.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Gallagher **Seconded by:** Cllr Sharkey

The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

1. **PF949** TO AGREE THE PROPOSED 2024/25 BUDGET

The RFO presented the budget and explained the 3 options.

There was a lengthy discussion surrounding the budget, with Councillors debating between the 3 options, the Clerk and RFO answered a number of questions surrounding the proposed budget options.

It was proposed that a decision not be made at this meeting, and that the debate takes place at Full Council, and that the Committee request the Town Clerk gets the budget audited by an independent person before then if time permits.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Gallagher **Seconded by:** Cllr Donovan

A recorded vote was requested.

**For:** Cllr Gallagher, Cllr Donovan, Cllr Cheta, Cllr Sharkey.

**Against:** Cllr Seabrook, Cllr Griffiths, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Veck.

The Chair used the casting vote to vote **against** the proposal. The proposal was not carried.

It was proposed that the Committee recommend option 3 to Full Council.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Campbell. The proposal was not seconded so the proposal was withdrawn.

It was proposed that all 3 options be referred to Full Council to debate.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Veck **Seconded by:** Cllr Seabrook

A recorded vote was requested.

**For:** Cllr Veck, Cllr Seabrook, Cllr Donovan, Cllr Cheta, Cllr Gallagher, Cllr Sharkey.

**Against:** none.

Cllr Campbell and Cllr Griffiths **abstained** from voting.

The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to refer all 3 budgetary options to Full Council by majority vote.

It was then proposed that the RFO and all Committee Chairs look very carefully at their budgets to identify any areas reductions can be made to create a possible 4th option.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Seabrook **Seconded by:** Cllr Veck

The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

1. **PF950** TO AGREE TO UNDERTAKE A BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY OF THE HUB

It was proposed that the Committee agree to undertake the building condition survey, funded from PTC’s CIL funds.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Gallagher **Seconded by:** Cllr Donovan

The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

1. **PF951** DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 30TH JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30PM.

The next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 30th January 2024 at 7:30pm.

1. **PF952** TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

**Proposed by:** Cllr Sharkey **Seconded by:** Cllr Veck

The Committee **resolved** to exclude press and public from the remaining items.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

***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.*

1. **PF953** AGED DEBT ANALYSIS

The RFO summarised the report, which the Committee **noted**.

*There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 20:43.*