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DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held in the Anzac Room, Community House on Tuesday 26th November 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr Alexander (Chair of Committee), Cllr Davies (Vice-Chair of Committee), Cllr Donovan (Chair of Council), Cllr Gallagher, Cllr Sharkey, Cllr Gordon-Garrett, Cllr Griffiths, Cllr Veck, Cllr Campbell.

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

No members of the public were in attendance.

1. PF1057 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chair read out a statement regarding Civility & Respect throughout the meeting, informed members of the fire procedures, that the meeting is being recorded, asked that phone be put onto silent, and asked that members speak up when speaking during the meeting.

2. PF1058 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 members of the public present.

3. PF1059 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS.

There were no apologies for absence.

4. PF1060 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PF1061 TO ADOPT THE COMMITTEE'S MINUTES OF 17TH SEPTEMBER 2024

Proposed by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett Seconded by: Cllr Donovan

The minutes of 17th September 2024 were **agreed** and **adopted**.

6. PF1062 TO REVIEW THE FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL YEAR TO-DATE: -

a. Finance Officer's report.

The RFO introduced and summarized the report, there were questions from the Committee about whether there were any particular areas for attention, and some questions relating to the s106 reclaim.

The Committee **noted** the report.

b. Bank account & Bank Reconciliation statements (for signing).

Proposed by: Cllr Campbell Seconded by: Cllr Sharkey

The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to sign the bank account and bank reconciliation statements.

c. Income & Expenditure report.

The RFO answered several questions from Committee about what expenditure related to on several expenditure codes.

The Committee **noted** the report.

d. Balance Sheet.

The Committee **noted** the balance sheet.

e. CIL & S.106 report (income, expenditure & bids).

The Committee **noted** the CIL & s.106 report.

f. List of payments (for approval).

Proposed by: Cllr Gallagher Seconded by: Cllr Campbell

The Committee **resolved** to **approve** the list of payments.

7. PF1063 TO RECEIVE THE INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Clerk introduced the report and commended the RFO for the outstanding interim internal audit report. Cllr Donovan asked that Committee pay thanks to the staff involved with the report and for the work involved.

8. PF1064 TO ADOPT A BIODIVERSITY POLICY

There was a brief discussion on the policy, which the Committee was generally supportive of, however, felt that a little further review was needed. Cllr Campbell highlighted several areas where corrections or amendments were needed, and the Committee asked that the Parks Officer look through the document, and that it should come back to Full Council for adoption in December.

9. PF1065 TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

Cllr Sharkey introduced the report, and there was a lengthy discussion on the current SLA and the Committee recognised the importance of supporting the LDCA, Committee felt that any changes could not be agreed separately to the budget setting process, so **noted** the report.

10. PF1066 TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS ON A POTENTIAL SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR

Cllr Campbell introduced the report and explained the role of the Community Navigator, the Committee discussed the role and the high demand for the service, Committee felt that any changes could not be agreed separately to the budget setting process, so **noted** the report.

11. PF1067 TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS ON A POTENTIAL SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE SCDA COMMUNITY SUPERMARKET

Cllr Campbell introduced the report, also citing the comments from the recent Grants Sub-Committee meeting. The Committee discussed potential benefits of an SLA with the Community Supermarket and generally felt that some support in the form of a reduced facility hire charge would be a good idea, and that this could be achieved by reducing the expecting income for Community House next year. Committee felt that any changes could not be agreed separately to the budget setting process, so **noted** the report.

12. PF1068 TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE CTLA

Cllr Alexander introduced the report and highlighted some of the struggles that the CTLA face. The Committee discussed the report, including the service that Peacehaven currently gets from the CTLA. Committee felt that any changes could not be agreed separately to the budget setting process, so **noted** the report.

13. PF1069 TO AGREE REVISED TERMS AND CONDITIONS RELATING TO CENTENARY PARK AND THE MUGA

The Town Clerk introduced the items, and members of the TFG involved in the T&Cs spoke on the item. It was proposed to agree the revised terms and conditions.

Proposed by: Cllr Griffiths Seconded by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

14. PF1070 TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING A TREASURY DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

The RFO introduced the report and summarised the benefits and drawbacks of the treasury deposit account. The Committee discussed the options, but ultimately felt that more information was needed, including a thorough investment strategy policy.

It was proposed that the item be deferred to allow the RFO time to develop a strategy to bring back to Committee or Council once she has had sufficient time to gather information and make recommendations.

Proposed by: Cllr Davies Seconded by: Cllr Griffiths
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

15. PF1071 TO AGREE 2025/26 ALLOTMENTS TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The Town Clerk introduced the item, highlighting that it's the smallest number of changes for several years. Cllr Gallagher also highlighted some of the specific changes that have been made and why.

It was proposed that the Committee agree to the 2025/26 allotment T&Cs as read.

Proposed by: Cllr Gallagher Seconded by: Cllr Davies.
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

16. PF1072 TO AGREE TO RECOMMEND TO ALLOW AN OVERSPEND ON A BUDGETARY CODE

The RFO introduced the report and summarised the key reasons for the high expenditure. The Committee briefly discussed the options for covering the overspend.

It was proposed to take the additional expenditure from the Big Parks Reserve (option b in the report).

Proposed by: Cllr Donovan Seconded by: Cllr Davies
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

17. PF1073 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE OVCA FUNDED PROJECT

The Clerk summarised the information in the report, Cllr Griffiths highlighted that we have had verbal confirmation that the costs will be covered, however, have not yet had this confirmed in writing.

The Committee **noted** the report.

18. PF1074 TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GRANTS SUB-COMMITTEE AND RATIFY THE SUB-COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed by: Cllr Griffiths Seconded by: Cllr Sharkey
The Committee **ratified** the grant sub committee's recommendations.

19. PF1075 TO AGREE THE 2025/26 BUDGET

There was a lengthy debate on the proposed budget, and the Committee looked at the effect of changing some elements of the budget, however was unable to agree on a recommendation, so the item will be

deferred to Full Council on 10th December. Members were asked to please send any additional comments or suggestions to the RFO and Clerk in the next couple of days.

20. PF1076 DATE OF NEXT MEETING – TUESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY 2025 AT 7.30PM

The next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 4th February 2024.

21. PF1077 TO RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE PRESS AND PUBLIC FROM THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

Proposed by: Cllr Davies Seconded by: Cllr Gordon-Garrett
The Committee **resolved** to exclude press and public from the remaining items.

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.*

22. PF1078 AGED DEBT ANALYSIS

The Committee **noted** the aged debt analysis.

In accordance with Standing Order 3x, the meeting at this point had been ongoing for almost 3 hours, the meeting was therefore suspended at 22:27.

The meeting was reconvened at 09:00 on Wednesday 27th November 2024, present were: Cllr Alexander, Cllr Campbell, Cllr Donovan, Cllr Veck, Cllr Griffiths, the Town Clerk, and the RFO.

23. PF1079 TO AGREE RENT INCREASES FOR 2025/26

The Committee discussed the proposed rent increases and the potential impact that this would have.

It was proposed to increase the rent for the Gateway Café by 2%.
Proposed by: Cllr Campbell Seconded by: Cllr Griffiths
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal by majority, with one abstention.

It was proposed to increase the rent for the Fields and Robson room by 5%.
Proposed by: Cllr Veck Seconded by: Cllr Campbell
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

It was proposed to increase the Hub Nursery rent by £1 per hour.
Proposed by: Cllr Campbell Seconded by: Cllr Veck
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal by majority, with one against.

It was proposed to increase the Police Room rent by 5%
Proposed by: Cllr Veck Seconded by: Cllr Donovan
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

It was proposed to increase the Phoenix Room rent by 5%
Proposed by: Cllr Campbell Seconded by: Cllr Veck
The Committee **resolved** to **agree** to this proposal.

24. PF1080 TO AGREE FACILITY HIRE CHARGES FOR 2025/26

There was a lengthy discussion about the proposed charges, with some of the more significant changes being debated and considered, it was highlighted that whilst the proposal represents a shake up of how the charges are applied, it does mean that the structure is much fairer moving forward for hirers.

It was proposed that the Committee agree to the proposed facility hire charges for 2025/26.

Proposed by: Cllr Campbell Seconded by: Cllr Alexander

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

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 09:57 on Wednesday 27th November 2024.