

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

15 JANUARY 2018 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors: R Berry
S Cotter
A Dodwell
K Ferguson
J M Freeman
S Jones
K Cursons
S Cursons (arrived at 1940 hours)
F Kharawala
C Palmer
E Wallace – in the Chair

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
S Sandiford (Head of Democratic and Central Services)
Clare Cummins, (Finance Officer) (left meeting at 2157 hours)
M Jahn (Committee Officer) (left meeting at 2157 hours)

Members of the public: 1

307/PF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received Councillor G Perham.

308/PF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

Councillor C Palmer declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 (payments) as the list of payments included a payment relating to Leighton-Linslade in Bloom, of which his wife was a committee member.

Councillor A Dodwell declared an interest in agenda item 12 (ii) (2018 Honorary Burgess nominations) as one of the nominees was known to her.

Councillor F Kharawala declared an interest in agenda items 7 and 8 (payments and nine month budget monitoring report) as her business was mentioned within the reports.

309/PF QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

310/PF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 20 November 2017 for consideration.

Minute reference 298/PF: the waste collection at Astral Park had been resolved reducing payments by approximately £2000 per year. It was noted that officers would be reviewing Financial Regulations and would bring any recommendations for changes to these or to existing procedures back to Committee for consideration.

Minute reference 304/PF: an update was given confirming a consultant had been appointed and attended three visits to date, giving advice and support to officers. Information would be available for Members before the next Policy and Finance Meeting to give advice to Councillors on complying with the new data protection regulations.

Minute reference 305/PF: the Committee received a verbal update confirming a February install date for the Modern Gov system with training for officers during March and April and then training for councillors if requested. It was anticipated that the system would go live in May 2018.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 20 November 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

311/PF MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Police Liaison Sub-Committee meeting held on 8 January 2018. A brief verbal update was given in respect of the Town Council's redeployable CCTV cameras and the Dunstable truck convoy.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Police Liaison Sub-Committee 9 October 2017.

312/PF COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

The Committee received the Work Plan and objectives for 2017-2018. A brief verbal update was given in respect of communications. The sign-off process for communications was queried and the Committee was advised that tightening up on this process was part of the reasoning behind development of an internal communications protocol. Members suggested that a named officer should oversee and sign off all communications to ensure not only accuracy but consistency in terms of style.

In respect of Operation Dodford, it was noted that a review meeting was due to be held with Bedfordshire Police, prior to consideration of a service level agreement for 2018-19.

A brief update was given on the Town Council Accommodation. The Town Clerk confirmed a surveyor had been appointed to act on the Town Council's behalf liaising with the landlord.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Objectives and Work Plan for 2017-2018.

313/PF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER PAYMENTS 2017

The Committee received two sets of schedules of payments which had previously been approved for payment by the Town Clerk and countersigned by two account signatories.

The six schedules for November dated 20 November 2017, 8 December 2017 and 11 December 2017 included BACS payments amounting to £146,761.42 (page numbers 2245-2246 and 2251-2264) and cheque payments amounting to £7,729.83 (cheque numbers 17111-17132), including White House petty cash amounting to £182.54, Astral Park £87.77 and TACTIC petty cash amounting to £36.85.

The monthly salaries listing for November 2017 amounting to £93,554.65 gross was received. A cash book report for November 2017, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

The schedules for December included BACS payments amounting to £113,383.41 (page numbers 2267-2275) and cheque payments amounting to £970.85 (cheque numbers 17133-17139 including White House petty cash amounting to £32.90 and Astral Park £56.89.

The monthly salaries listing for December 2017 amounting to £57,620.45 gross was received. A cash book report for December 2017, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

RESOLVED to note the schedules of accounts for November and December 2017.

It was noted that all payments had been made within the budget and that there were no irregularities to be drawn to the attention of the Committee.

314/PF NINE MONTH BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a nine month budgeting report for the period April – December 2017.

A question was raised regarding the market income and whether there would be a greater deficit than originally forecast. It was noted that there

were many variables which could affect market income, in particular the weather conditions. Detailed financial reports were presented to the Market Sub-Committee. The Market was recognised to be a community asset and a benefit to the town and therefore, while the aspiration remained to increase income, the Town Council would continue to subsidise this as a service.

A further question was raised regarding the gap between income and expenditure at Astral Park and the prediction to year end.

RESOLVED to receive the report.

315/PF 2018-2019 BUDGET

The Committee received a report for the budget setting process 2018-2019. The budget was predicated on committee budgets which had been reviewed and endorsed by Town Council Standing Committees during December/January. The budget had been developed to achieve a 0% increase in council tax. Due to the completion of a longstanding loan, this had been achieved without any requirement to draw down from reserves and despite a lower than anticipated increase in the Council Tax base.

The Committee questioned the number of dwellings as provided by the local authority, as this seemed low when compared to the housing development which had taken place to the south of the town. It was agreed that the Town Clerk should seek clarification of this number from Central Bedfordshire Council.

In addition to the proposed budget, the Committee received an updated version of the Town Council five year financial plan, which outlined available funds for agreed and anticipated projects. The plan would continue to be the subject of ongoing iteration.

RESOLVED to note the report.

RECOMMENDED to Council to approve the proposed budget of £2,134,507 for the Financial Year 2018-2019, subject to clarification being sought from Central Bedfordshire Council on the number of new dwellings in the Parish.

RECOMMENDED to Council that the Council Tax of £149.58 (Band D Equivalent) remain unchanged for the Financial Year 2018-19.

316/PF BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDEN PARTY

The Committee received information from the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils regarding the annual nomination for the Summer 2018 Garden Party.

RESOLVED to nominate previous Town Mayor Cllr S Cotter for the draw to attend the 2018 Buckingham Palace Garden Party.

317/PF 2018-2019 RISK REGISTER AND ACTION PLAN

The Committee received a report regarding the Town Council Risk Register and Action Plan for 2018-2019 and considered the recommendations contained therein. No questions were raised in respect of the Risk Register or the proposed Action Plan.

RESOLVED to note the report.

RECOMMENDED to Council to approve the Risk Register and Action Plan for 2018-2019, to be signed by the Town Mayor and Responsible Financial Officer.

318/PF EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. The public and press to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of detailed discussion regarding:

- (i) Websites support contract**
- (ii) 2018 Honorary Burgess nominations**
- (iii) Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held 8 January 2018.**

319/PF WEBSITES SUPPORT CONTRACT

The Committee received a report to seek endorsement in terms of a website support provider for 2018-2019. Three suppliers had been approached, two quoted and one declined to quote. Proposals were not only for secure hosting of the Town Council's four websites, but for technical support and content management support, given the increasing level of work needed to manage and maintain the sites. The level of external support needed would be monitored for the twelve month duration of the contract and would then inform any future agreement. During the initial twelve months, a full review of the websites would be undertaken and a development plan created to take forward into 2019 and onwards.

A number of minor queries were raised in respect of the quotations provided. While the Committee was broadly supportive of the recommendation made, it was agreed that clarification should be sought on these points and a final decision made by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED to appoint Provider B as website support provider for twelve months from 26 February 2018, subject to final approval by the Town Clerk following clarification of the queries raised.

320/PF 2018 HONORARY BURGESS NOMINATIONS

The Committee received and considered three nominations for the 2018 award of Honorary Burgess., further to the recommendation made by the Grants and Awards Sub-Committee on 13 November 2017.

The Committee agreed to support all three nominations. Nominees would now be contacted to seek their agreement to progress to a final decision at Council.

RECOMMENDED to Council approval of three nominations for the 2018 Honorary Burgess award.

C Cummins and M Jahn left the meeting.

321/PF MINUTES OF PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2018.

The Committee received the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 8 January 2018. A brief verbal explanation was given in respect of the items discussed at that meeting. The Committee noted the resolutions made in respect of the Service Level Agreement for Human Resources and Occupational Health Support, TACTIC staffing and Cultural and Economic Services staffing.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 8 January 2018.

The meeting closed at 2109 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2018.

Chair

26 FEBRUARY 2018.