

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD VIA ZOOM ON  
MONDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7:02 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8:25 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alan Peak (Chairman), Ray Armstrong, Roger Bailey, Ciaran Cronnelly, Dave Dash, Peter Fox, Robert Payne, Lisa Pilgrim, Ian Porter, Tim Taylor, Sonia Russe (S) and Helen Thornton.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO), Fay Powell (Grounds Manager/ATC Public Services), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), and Emma Williams (Tourism Marketing Officer)

<b>261</b>	<b>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b>  Apologies were received from Councillor Gill Bute who was substituted by Councillor Sonia Russe.  Councillor Marcia Pepperall was absent from the meeting.
<b>262</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest received.
<b>263</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Ian Porter <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Fox  A vote was taken and <b>carried</b> . Accordingly, it was:  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.
<b>264</b>	<b>The minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance held on 29<sup>th</sup> January (unapproved)</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held on 29 <sup>th</sup> January (unapproved) be noted.
<b>265</b>	<b>Monthly Financial Reports: January and February 2021</b>  <b>a) For Approval</b> Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure

	<p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Robert Payne <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Ian Porter</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>.1 RESOLVED:</b> That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for January and February 2021 be approved.</p> <p><b>b) For Noting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Bank Reconciliations</li><li>ii. Budgetary Control Report</li><li>iii. Bank Interest Report</li><li>iv. Schedule of Receipted Income</li><li>v. Overspend Month end report</li><li>vi. Bad debt report</li></ul> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to clarify the overspend on health &amp; safety consultancy, this was explained as additional services from the consultant in relation to Covid-19 restrictions, that laid outside of the existing contract terms.</p> <p>It was clarified that the balance for the Town Councillor email addresses had been paid and would be reflected in the financial reports for March.</p> <p>In response to a query against the Consumer Price Index justification cited as an increased spend against utilities, the Deputy Town Clerk reported that an increase in utility costs generally had been seen and that this would be looked into by the Finance team and reviewed every 6months.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk also advised that bad debts were being pursued, albeit with some difficulties, given creditors' staff being less easily available whilst working from home or absent. Some clarification was required in relation to rebates and potential bad debts lodged against Visit Weston customers for partnership fees, this was agreed to be discussed with the Tourism Manager and Assistant Town Clerk - Operational Services.</p> <p>A member enquired as to the detail behind the Bristol City Council debt, to which the Deputy Town Clerk would explore and advise members after the meeting.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>.2 RESOLVED:</b> That reports 5b i – vi be noted.</p>
<p><b>266</b></p>	<p><b>To approve the final Earmarked Reserves requirements for the year 2021/2022</b></p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the totals for ERM were as reported at the Town Council meeting, with additional lines (17,18, 19 and 20 as shown on circulated report).</p> <p>It was clarified that 17, Environmental Climate Change balance had decreased due to Food Consultancy teams financing the food clubs.</p>

	<p>A question was asked as to the predictability of the amounts received through CIL funding. This was explained as a twice-yearly receipt which would fluctuate in total, driven by the amount of development underway at a given time, within the parish boundaries.</p> <p>A member queried the omission of ERM funds for the previously resolved funding of a Street Art Festival and beach showers provision. This was confirmed by the Deputy Town Clerk as £30,000, which would be corrected and included on the ERM ledger. Members would need to approve the EMR with this amendment.</p> <p>A request by a member was made for hard copies of the 2021/22 budget. This was accepted by the Deputy Town Clerk, but that members should make individual requests for bound and printed copies of the new budget if required, as uptake was significantly reduced the previous year.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Helen Thornton  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Ray Armstrong</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve the recognised Final Earmarked Reserve requirements for the year 2021/22 at £1,027,490, to include £30,000 for the provision of the Street Art Festival and beach showers.</p>
<p><b>267</b></p>	<p><b>To Approve Budget Overspend – Public Toilets</b></p> <p>The minute extract from Community Services Committee had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Town Clerk summarised the minute extract pertaining to the recommendation from committee that hybrid payment methods be installed at the Town Council-owned public toilets, allowing both contactless card and traditional coin operated payments at the cost of £17,800, for 7 cubicles (7 x £2550).</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that after consulting with Torbay Council who used contactless only mechanisms and the North Somerset Council Equality Team, it was deemed unnecessary to conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment on a hybrid mechanism.</p> <p>Debate ensued. It was largely agreed that the coin-operated locks were a target for vandalism and mechanical failure, with frequent outlay for maintenance and repair costs. Some members expressed concern at the potential inequality of installing locks that only accepted contactless card payments, as some service users may be unable, or unwilling, to pay in this way.</p> <p>The public toilets situated at Grove Park were identified as the most frequently targeted for vandalism, with some members suggesting that coin-operated locks should not be incorporated at this location to avoid repeated repairs and time spent out of order.</p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that back in 2013 the council was assured by the builders that converted the Grove Park toilets that the disabled cubicles were to fully accessible standard. The Community Services Committee had resolved to review the location of the Grove Park toilets as a long-term project but a short term solution was needed.</p> <p>An AMENDMENT was then</p>

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Peter Fox  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ray Armstrong

To approve the installation of three contactless card-only locks at Grove Park, with the remaining other locations, receiving the hybrid payment mechanisms.

A vote was then taken and **lost**.

It was then

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Helen Thornton  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor David Dash

To accept the substantive recommendation by the Community Services Committee:

1. That option 2. to retain coin access in tandem with contactless - removing the current coin pay units completely. To create space required for new combined coin/contactless unit and fit interior lock/unlock. Fit new combi unit to allow user to enter using coin or card at the cost of £17,800, for 7 cubicles (7 of at £2550)
2. That an Equality Impact Assessment be undertaken as part of the process.

A vote was taken on the AMENDMENT and **lost**.

It was then

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Roger Bailey

To install contactless card only payment locks at all sites with the exception of one cubicle at Grove Park receiving a hybrid coin and card mechanism. Which found **no seconder**.

There was no seconder for this proposal.

It was then

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Helen Thornton  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor David Dash

A vote was then taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

1. To install only one hybrid lock at Grove Park toilets, in order to minimise vandalism likelihood, with the two other cubicles having only contactless card locks.
2. The remaining four cubicles at other locations to receive hybrid mechanisms at an additional cost of £12,750 (5 x £2500).

**268 Remote Meetings and MHCLG consultation**

The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.

The Town Clerk summarised the report and welcomed thoughts from members. He had consulted with group leaders and therefore advised the recommendation within the report.

It was questioned as to the possibility of using the chamber at the Town Hall to host Town Council meetings. The Town Clerk explained that North Somerset Council had not allowed the use of the chamber during the easing of lockdown restrictions in summer 2020, for the September Town Council meeting due to their risk assessments. However, bookings had been made to use the courtyard space at Weston Museum for forthcoming committee meetings, after 21st June, when further Covid-19 restrictions were due to be lifted.

Debate ensued, with members in agreement that the return of in-person committee meetings was hotly anticipated, but only when it was safe and sensible to do so. Some members expressed disappointment at the decision from central government to end legislation allowing virtual committee meetings, especially as the same rules did not apply to elected members of Parliament at Westminster.

An addition to the recommendation was proposed; to accept the Town Clerk's recommendations, but to also write to John Penrose MP, to articulate the Town Council's disappointment at the decisions reached by his colleagues in relation to the aforementioned legislation.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Timothy Taylor  
**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Ciaran Cronnelly

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

1. To recommend to the Town Council:
    - a. That, until it is safe to meet in person (or the law is clarified to allow remote committee meetings), all committees operate as Working Parties to enable them to meet virtually and make recommendations either to Council or to the Town Clerk as appropriate.
    - b. The power of delegation to the Town Clerk of all statutory powers not reserved to the full Council, originally made in March 2020, be reconfirmed for the municipal year 2021-22 to enable implementation of decisions.
    - c. Any delegated decisions under this resolution which are not in consideration of working party recommendations be taken by the Town Clerk in consultation with the relevant committee chairman and vice-chairman, or where they are unavailable the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.
  - 4) That the Council agrees to resume normal committee decision making at the first opportunity and that this decision be reviewed at the latest after 6 months (IE at the latest before the end of November 2021).
  - 5) That a letter be sent to John Penrose MP to inform of the Town Council's difficulties faced ahead of the change in legislation.
2. To approve the response to the MHCLG Consultation Paper as reported

**269 CIL Monies Allocation of funds – Old Town Quarry**

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated.

	<p>The scoring matrix was also used to screen share for the benefit of members.</p> <p>Members were reminded of the recently adopted CIL Policy with regard to the spending of allocated CIL funds received. Furthermore, it had been acknowledged that there was an opportunity to consider allocation of some monies from the fund, for works required at The Old Town Quarry in the event that it transferred to the Town Council’s management via lease, currently being negotiated with NSC. The CIL Earmarked Reserve funds stood at £182,237 as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk asked for the draft CIL funds scoring matrix to be screen shared for members’ ease, and explained the application process parameters. It was made clear that the form could be altered or updated in the future, but that the draft was an appropriate launch to an ongoing and potentially evolving policy.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Ian Porter  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Fox</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve the draft scoring matrix for use in the allocation of CIL funding to be reviewed annually.</p>
	<p><i>It was <b>resolved</b> under the Public Bodies (Admissions of Meeting) Act 1960 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for reasons of confidential nature of the following business.</i></p>
<p><b>270</b></p>	<p><b>Towerpiece Legal Claim</b></p> <p>The Town Clerk verbally reported that there had been no progress on the case and that he was continuing to defend the claim, using Wards solicitors to conduct the litigation on behalf of the Town Council, as instructed.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the update from the Town Clerk be noted.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:25 pm</p> <p>Signed.....Dated.....  Chairman of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee</p>