

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE MUSEUM ON
MONDAY 20TH JUNE 2022**

Meeting Commenced: 7:00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.33 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Roger Bailey (S), Mark Canniford, Sarah Codling, Peter Crew (S), David Dash, Peter Fox, Robert Payne, Alan Peak, Tim Taylor and Helen Thornton.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Sonia Russe (Town Mayor), Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearce (Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer) and Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer/Officer Manager).

26 Election of Chairman

Nominations for the position of Chairman were invited.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton

SECONDED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor

A vote was taken and **carried**, and accordingly it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Alan Peak be elected Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee for the year 2022-23.

27 To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Porter who was substituted by Peter Crew and Lisa Pilgrim who was substituted by Roger Bailey.

28 Election of Vice Chairman

Nominations for the position of Vice Chairman were invited.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Robert Payne

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

A vote was taken and **carried**, and accordingly it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mark Canniford be elected Vice Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee for the year 2022-23.

29 To receive Declarations of Interest

Councillors Robert Payne and Tim Taylor declared pecuniary interests in item 13. Investment Strategy Policy as this discussed their employer.

30 To approve the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 25th April 2022

The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Fox
SECONDED BY: Councillor David Dash

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

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

31 The minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held on 26th May 2022 (unapproved) (attached)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held on 26th May 2022 (unapproved) be noted.

32 Monthly Financial Reports: March & April 2022

a) For Approval

Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor
SECONDED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling

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

.1 RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for March & April 2022 be approved.

b) For Noting

- i. Bank Reconciliations
- ii. Budgetary Control Report
- iii. Bank Interest Report
- iv. Schedule of Receipted Income
- v. Bad debt report
- vi. Overspend report

It was noted that month 1 for item bii. budgetary control report was missing and would be emailed to members after the meeting.

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

.2 RESOLVED: That reports 5b i – vi be noted.

33 To receive the Final Interim Audit Report for the year 2022-23

The Audit report had been previously circulated.

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

RESOLVED: That the Final Interim Audit Report for the year 2022-23 be received.

34 Year End Accounts for the year ending 31/03/22

The yearend accounts had been previously circulated.

As part of the Audit requirement members were requested to

- a) Consider the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by members as a whole;
- b) Approve the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and Sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return)
- c) Sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return)
- d) Receive and Note the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the (AGAR – Annual return)

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling

SECONDED BY: Councillor Robert Payne

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

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by members as a whole;
2. To approve the Accounting Statements (AGAR – Annual return) by resolution; and Sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return)
3. That the Chairman sign and date as required (AGAR – Annual return)
4. To receive and note the accompanying Statement of Accounts (not audited) as supporting documents to the (AGAR – Annual return)

35 To receive the Recommendation from the Civic Consultation Group to fund a screen for the Remembrance Day Service

The Chairman invited the Town Mayor, Councillor Sonia Russe to address the meeting in support of the recommendation.

The Town Mayor urged members to consider funding a screen for the service as it attracted thousands of people to the town and Grove Park. It was a recognisable community event for rate payers of Weston-super-Mare.

Discussion ensued. It was felt that the cost should be shared with North Somerset Council as it was a community event.

Issues with the siting of the screen were raised as this did cause problems in previous years for health and safety reasons and not everyone could see it.

It was reported that it would not be feasible for North Somerset Council to assist with the cost as they would not be able to do so for the other 39 parishes in the district. Now that the town council were responsible for the event, it was suggested that the event should be managed as a package and linked up with an events company.

The Italian gardens was suggested as a large little used space which could be utilised for a screen. It was noted that the £4,000 estimated cost for the hire of a screen was based on the 2018 quotation and was now likely to have increased.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the subject had been discussed at a recent group leaders meeting, where a suggestion had been made to contact Weston College to enquire about the use of their screen that they used to live stream their graduation ceremonies. The safety aspects of siting a screen in the park were reiterated as this impacted on the access routes.

The Town Clerk clarified that there would still be a cost element to consider, even if the council were to explore options with the college. Direction from members was requested on whether they wanted to approve the expenditure and pursue further exploration.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that there was no allocated budget for this but budget could be identified at members' request.

It was suggested to utilise the £60,000 Community Events budget, in response to which the committee was advised that there was an application process.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Fox

A vote was taken and **carried**. (one against), Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED: In principle, to pursue the recommendation to allocate budget provision to fund a screen for the Remembrance Day Service, subject to officers' exploration into the costs/options on shared responsibility of the event, for further discussion at the next committee meeting in August.

36 To receive the notes of the Anti-Racism Working Group

The notes of the meetings held in February, April and May were had been previously circulated.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that there was some very good work happening within the meetings, however they were very hard meetings to facilitate. Predominantly attended by officers and dwindling representations from community groups. There needed to be some direction from the council on what the purpose of the meetings should be.

Members who had attended the meetings concurred that the meetings were difficult and officers were being held to account for council decisions. A work plan with clear objectives was needed.

It was suggested to go back to the original motion to remind members what was pledged and consult the Equalities Officer ant North Somerset Council on equality impact assessments.

It was reported that officers and members had engaged in two sets of training and invited speakers to the Museum.

There seemed to be a falling out between the community groups which was impacting on representation at meetings.

It was suggested that the council should refer back to its terms of reference and encourage more member representation at meetings.

It was felt strongly that the meetings were not a productive use of time for all involved. The group needed to be refocused and the council should review its policies in line with the pledges.

The original motion by Councillor Catherine Gibbons was well intentioned but maybe not specific enough.

Discussion ensued on the lack of uptake from minority ethnic groups standing for election and the wording of corporate material and how this could be improved. Did the council have the right policies in place and could the advertising of vacancies be reviewed. It was suggested that the Town Mayor could head up a 'Standing for election' vacancy event.

It was suggested that council policies could be submitted to the ARWG for advice and reviewed.

It was felt that monthly meetings were unnecessary and should revert to bi-monthly at most with immediate effect.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling

SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Fox

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

RESOLVED: That the Town Council continues to commit to its pledges to become an anti-racist council and invite members of the ARWG to a workshop to review its effectiveness and objectives and agree a work plan.

37 **Town Quarry Update**

The Town Clerk verbally updated members that negotiations had been difficult however, planning permission for the demolition of the illegal building had been granted and would take place mid-September.

North Somerset Council Officers had agreed a way forward following legal legislation and he has written a 'comfort letter' on behalf of the council, which is not legally binding that subject to issues being rectified, the council intends to lease the site. Details are still to be negotiated and it was hoped that NSC make a decision quickly.

Members were agreed that it was the responsibility of the Civic Society to deal with the sub leases before the council takes over.

The Town Clerk informed that the Quarry would close in September for works to be undertaken and reopened in the Spring 2023. However, it was noted that the risks associated with doing this may result it losing business.

Councillor David Dash left the meeting at 8.23 pm

Concern was raised about the eviction of a local business and whether a relocation could not be agreed. The Town Clerk advised that the business had erected an illegal building and expanded beyond its original agreed remit.

Councillor David Dash re-joined the meeting at 8.26 pm

RESOLVED: To note the verbal update.

Councillors Robert Payne and Tim Taylor left the meeting at 8.26 pm

38 Investment Strategy Policy

Members were requested to approve the Investment Strategy Policy document as previously circulated and recommended by the Expenditure and Governance Working Party.

It was noted that there was an amendment needed on page 3 to include 5.2 & 5.3.

It was reported that having carefully considered the current guidance, this review provides the council with a much more fitting and robust investment policy suited to the size the council has now grown to in recent years. There would be a need as the country continues to recover from the covid situation to have a degree of flexibility and it is therefore

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford

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

RESOLVED:

1. To adopt the revised Investment Policy.
2. That alternative investment options be explored as necessary with the year including fixed term investments and CCLA property fund for Revenue reserves, bought forward general and EMR balances which are deemed appropriate for more than 3 months working capital (precept)
3. To approve the opening of 2 x new bank accounts for investment purposes to split the council's investment as per this policy:
 - Lloyds Bank
 - Nationwide

Councillor Tim Taylor re-joined the meeting at 8.30 pm

39 Town Council Insurance Policy due to now expire 30.06.22

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk was circulated at the meeting.

recommending to approve the provision of insurance cover from 01.07.22

The Deputy Town Clerk was disappointed to report that on Friday 10th June she had held a meeting with the council's insurance broker, for the review of the existing policy which was undertaken annually every year to ensure nothing needed to be altered. Unfortunately, at the meeting it was confirmed that regrettably Military Mutual (TMM) have had issues with their reinsurers and as a result have had to withdraw from the local council market and are unable to honour their long term agreement. A full market tender exercise

has been undertaken, speaking to in excess of 20 insurers before deciding to reappoint Aviva as scheme insurer moving forward. The current Insurance with TMM will cease on 30th June 2022

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that she did not have the capacity within that timeframe to undertake a full procurement process and advised that the insurance premium would be at least double, at around £30,000.

Councillor Peter Crew declared a personal interest as a customer of Aviva.

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

RESOLVED:

1. Authorise the Town Clerk in liaison with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of P & F to appoint Aviva for a period of 1 year upon receipt of quotation
2. Undertake a full procurement exercise for the renewal of this period July 2023.
3. Authorise the overspend across services for Insurance Premium as required from quotation received.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.33 pm

Signed.....Dated.....
Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee