

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON  
MONDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2015**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.45 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Peter Crew (Chairman), Alan Peak (Vice Chairman), Roger Bailey, Peter Fox, Michal Lyall (S), Michal Kus and Sonia Russé.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm L Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer, Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), and Becky Parker (Weston & Somerset Mercury).

<b>426.</b>	<p><b>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Canniford, Robert Payne and Richard Tucker.</p> <p>Councillor Richard Tucker was substituted by Councillor Mike Lyall.</p>
<b>427.</b>	<p><b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no Declarations of Interest received.</p>
<b>428.</b>	<p><b>To approve Minutes of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee Meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015</b></p> <p>The Minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Sonia Russé</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p>
<b>429.</b>	<p><b>a) Minutes (unapproved) of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015</b></p> <p>The Minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda and it was noted that they were draft until approved.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Minutes be received and noted.</p> <p><b>b)References from other Committees</b></p> <p><b>i) Electronic Agendas</b> The recommendation from the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p>

The Town Clerk advised that following the change to government secondary legislation, it was lawful for agendas to be sent electronically to those councillors who requested it. Full details had been discussed by the Expenditure & Governance Working Party and the Committee Officer had been undertaking a costing exercise on paper agenda distribution. The Council did not have the budget to provide 31 iPads/tablets to councillors. Many other councils had gone electronic without providing equipment and many councillors were happy to use their own personal equipment to receive the electronic paperwork.

The Committee Officer explained that she had used this meeting as an example to undertake an agenda distribution costing exercise which included Officers' time, stationery and postage costs.

The view was expressed that it was unfair that town councillors would have to use their own personal equipment to receive the paperwork when district councillors were paid and provided with equipment. In response the Chairman informed that originally, 6 district councillors had volunteered to use their own equipment to test the electronic method, which had proved successful. Subsequently equipment was provided to all councillors to replace paper agendas. The Town Council's next stage was to ask all incoming councillors (post-election) their preference within the induction process.

Councillors were generally in favour of the electronic agenda distribution method but requested that some paper copies of the agenda and supporting papers still be available at the meeting.

The changes would develop over a period of time and would not be instant from May 2015.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That all councillors be given the option to receive all agenda papers electronically with effect from May 2015 on their own personal equipment; to be pilot tested over a 12 month period.
2. That a costing exercise for 31 iPads be undertaken in conjunction with stationery and postage costs and referred to the Policy & Finance Committee in readiness for the 2016/2017 budget setting process.

**ii) Tourism Review**

The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman advised that this was an ongoing review via the Tourism and Leisure Committee which needed a decision from the Committee regarding the funding of a possible second Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) campaign at the cost of approximately £5,000 for one year, from the Tourism and Leisure Advertising budget.

The Town Clerk highlighted the minutes of the Tourism and Leisure Committee which refer to the relationship with the BID and recommended that the relationship be reviewed within the Love Weston review. The rest of the review will carry on and the role of this Committee was to consider approval of funds from the Tourism and Leisure Advertising budget for a second SEO campaign, if needed.

Debate ensued. Reference was made to an advert in the paper regarding Google changing their search engine criteria which could affect the website.

The Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Committee hoped that there would be some improvement in collaboration with the Council's partnering bodies over the next year.

It was felt that the representatives of the Town Council who are appointed to sit on the Business Improvement District (BID) needed to be considered more seriously for the future administration as there seemed to be confusion and a lack of a robust reporting procedure in place. The Town Clerk clarified that the Town Council appointed three councillors to sit on the Town Centre Partnership. The BID Steering Group was a separate group set up by the Town Centre Partnership on which the Town Council did not appoint representatives. The Town Clerk advised that the representatives for the Town Centre Partnership could be reviewed in readiness for the next new administration.

The Chairman informed that there seemed to be some confusion regarding the business of the Town Centre Partnership and the BID Steering Group. He highlighted on the joint 2015 publication produced and approved by the Town Council, North Somerset Council and the BID.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Michal Kus

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Roger Bailey

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Town Clerk's report be noted.
2. To approve the funding of a second SEO Campaign from the Tourism and Leisure Advertising budget if required.

**iii) Dog Bin Maintenance Overspend**

The recommendation from the Community Services Committee had been previously circulated with the agenda.

The Town Clerk informed that there were only six dog bins now stored at Grove House as two had been used for replacements. In addition, an issue had come to fruition since the renewal of the dog bin maintenance contract. The new contract was only budgeted for emptying the dog bins once per week and had commenced on this basis, however some bins would need emptying twice per week. This

had created some complaints of dog bins in some areas overflowing and the Council needed to keep some bins in reserve for replacement.

The Responsible Financial Officer advised that bins being emptied twice per week where necessary would mean an overspend on the maintenance budget.

There was concern that two of the bins on the request list were outside of a school where there was a severe dog faeces problem and that the Council should provide a dog bin if they have one available. There had also been requests for dog bins from two councillors for their wards which needed to be addressed.

The Chairman urged that the Council should wait until the signage and enforcement was in place from the Community Response Team to see if there was any effect on dog fouling before any new bins were installed. If the problems at these request locations still continued, then the Committee Officer was authorised to action that these bins be emptied twice a week.

For information, the Responsible Financial Officer calculated that if the Council were to install six dog bins then there would be an overspend of £2,496 on the maintenance budget at month one.

The Chairman reported that the dog bins sited at the woods that could not be accessed by the contractors should be adopted by North Somerset Council and recommended that the overspend be deferred for one meeting cycle to allow for the Community Response Team enforcement work to take effect and review the situation.

The Committee Officer requested that the Chairman make clear at his meeting with North Somerset Council that the Town Council had an up to date record of the location of all of its 44 dog bins and that they were clearly numbered and marked as Town Council property and had been for over five years, contrary to the implication of a letter recently received from North Somerset Council.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Alan Peak

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Roger Bailey

**RESOLVED:** That the request for a budget overspend on the dog bin maintenance budget be deferred for one meeting cycle in order for a review to be undertaken of the impact of the enforcement work of the Community Response Team.

430.	<p><b>Monthly Financial Reports:-</b></p> <p><b>a) For Approval</b> Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for February and March 2015</p> <p>The Chairman apologised for the incorrect month heading listed on the agenda and confirmed that the reports were correct.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the schedule be received and approved</p> <p><b>b) For Noting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i) Bank Reconciliations for February 2015</li><li>ii) Budgetary Control Report for February 2015</li><li>iii) Bank Interest Report for February 2015</li><li>iv) Schedule of Receipted Income for February 2015</li><li>v) Bank Reconciliations for March 2015</li><li>vi) Budgetary Control Report for March 2015</li><li>vii) Bank Interest Report for March 2015</li><li>viii) Schedule of Receipted Income for March 2015</li><li>xiii) Income Analysis</li></ul> <p>A query was raised regarding the toilet income recorded as zero and the Responsible Financial Officer explained that this was correct and represented a period where the toilets were either undergoing refurbishment or closed.</p> <p>In answer to a query the Chairman informed that the target was to decrease the theatre subsidy year on year and that the Blakehay Theatre Supervisor had been authorised to test other ways of generating income. The Blakehay was a community service and not an income stream but it needed to be run as economically as possible. The Blakehay would be accommodating the users of the Museum during the closure.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer felt that Officers had worked well in managing expenditure, recognising the shortfall in income. It was suggested that future councillors appointed to the Policy &amp; Finance Committee should be trained in the finance reporting procedures and the Responsible Financial Officer advised that she was happy to include this within the councillors induction day on 13<sup>th</sup> June and was also happy to assist any councillor at any time on a one to one basis.</p> <p>The change in the Water Park charging dates were queried and it was informed by the Chairman that there had been a misprint on the pocket guide publication indicating that the charging period was from 1<sup>st</sup> May as opposed to the agreed date of 18<sup>th</sup> April. So the decision had been made to amend the charging period in line with the misprint to avoid confusion.</p>
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	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the reports be received and noted.</p> <p><b>c) Overspend report for February and March 2015</b> The overspend report for February was available at the meeting. The overspend report for March was not available.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the overspend report for February 2015 be received and noted.</p>
<p><b>431.</b></p>	<p><b>Internal Audit First and Second Reports</b> Both reports had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer informed that due to a change in auditor the reports had only been received in late February and so could not be reported any sooner.</p> <p>The Chairman applauded all staff on the accomplishment of a clean audit considering that it had been a very busy year with the HLF bid.</p> <p>The latest update on the toilet charging was requested and the Responsible Financial Officer reported that, while there had been teething problems, the Council had set up systems in place to deal with any reported problems.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To receive and note both the Internal Audit First and Second Reports.</p>
<p><b>432.</b></p>	<p><b>Final Earmarked Reserves</b> Final Earmarked Reserves for the year 2015/2016 had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Sonia Russè</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Final Earmarked Reserves for the year 2015/2016 be approved.</p>
<p><b>433.</b></p>	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b> The Medium Term Financial Plan had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer informed that the plan was a snapshot of the budget over the next five years. The main increase was in general reserves to reflect the reduction in the North Somerset grant which had been calculated at - 25% over the next five years. The Responsible Financial Officer's recommendation was to replenish General Reserves at Year 3 2016/2017 which had been indicated on the plan.</p> <p>It was queried why there was a CPI inflation increase of 2.7% on expenditure and income and the Responsible Financial Officer explained that for consistency, the figure had been applied across years three to six at the time of the plan recognising that there could be a change in inflation later.</p>

	<p>The 10% increase on the Museum expenditure was queried and the Responsible Financial Officer informed that the increase was due to the delivery of the Museum activity plan and the need for more sensitivity testing as the Council had been very cautious in regard to income within this this year.</p> <p>The income for the allotments was questioned and the Responsible Financial Officer reported that the only income generated on the allotments was at Hutton Moor by the Horticultural Society.</p> <p>Discussion ensued regarding the allotment site at Locking castle and the S.106 money tied up there with the developers. The Chairman informed that the S.106 money could be withdrawn by the developer if it was not spent the agreed purposes. The Responsible Financial Officer clarified that £1,000 per year was committed to the nature reserve on the site.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Medium Term Financial Plan be received.</p>
<p>434.</p>	<p><b>HLF Project Appointment of Architects and CDM</b></p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer apologised for the late circulation of the report as that she had only met the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) adviser the previous week. The report had two elements:</p> <p><b><u>1. Appointment of Architects</u></b></p> <p>Members were requested to consider the two options outlined within the report and provide approval for appointment of project architects.</p> <p>The Chairman advised that the Chairman of the Museum Working Party favoured option one which would be to re-appoint Chedburn and Dudley as architects to complete the HLF Project and he supported this on the basis of their knowledge and experience of the project.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer also recommended this option and advised that Chedburn and Dudley's fees paid had been less than the sum budgeted and so a saving had been made. There was provision within the Council's approved Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and procurement Guidance to appoint without further procurement process. A quotation for this work has been received (Appendix 3) of the report.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To re-appoint Chedburn and Dudley as architects to complete the HLF Project (subject to HLF approval, noting that without this a tender exercise would need to be undertaken) in accordance with the following:  Standing order 39.2 Tendering Procedures:</p>

	<p>(d) Exceptions to Procedure (v) The execution of work, the purchase of goods or materials or the provision of services involving specialist, scientific, artistic knowledge.</p> <p>Financial Regulations paragraph 11 Contracts:</p> <p>11.1.1 Exceptions to regulation 11: 11.1.1.(4) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council</p> <p><b><u>2. Appointment of CDM</u></b> The Responsible Financial Officer informed the Committee that this was additional to the Project Manager appointment and that there was a list of services which she felt the Council needed to tender for in order to receive best value. Acknowledging the fact that there had not been a robust procurement done since 2010/11, it was felt that the role should be subject to a fresh and robust procurement process.</p> <p>The specification could be obtained from John West Contractors and the aim would be to issue the quotation that Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April with a two week turnaround. Approval of the successful quotation would be by the Chairman and Town Clerk, following the Council's procurement process under Standing Order 39.2(a). A delay in this process would result in an overall delay of 16 weeks.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> In order to assure the HLF and Town Council of best value that the CDM / Project Management (Build &amp; Construction) role be tendered through the Council's and HLF procurement procedure, to include the other professional roles required for the project detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; nothing this would need to be done as soon as possible in order to work within the approved programme. As such the Town Clerk / Chairman of committee would work within standing orders to approve acceptance of the quotations (all subject to HLF approval prior to appointment.)</p>
<p>435.</p>	<p><b>Planned and Preventative Maintenance Works for the year 2015/2016</b> The Surveyor's report had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer explained that members' approval was needed on section 3 of the report 'Proposed 2015/16 Budget and also bringing forward the review within the 2015/16 budget in order to achieve an accurate five year plan.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Planned and Preventative Maintenance works for the year 2015/2016 as reported be approved.</p>
<p>436.</p>	<p><b>Electricity Dispute at Barcode</b> The report of the Town Clerk was circulated at the meeting.</p>



	<p>The Town Clerk apologised for the late arrival of his report and advised that the purpose of the report was for members to note the terms of the final settlement. At its meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 the Policy and Finance Committee had considered a report regarding a claim of £32,473 in respect of electricity at Barcode, 2 South Parade between 2005 and 2012. The Committee had delegated the settlement of the claim to any two of: the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Deputy Leader; in consultation with the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Following extensive negotiations and with external legal advice the Town Council had made an offer to pay the sum of £14,246 in unit charges calculated back to January 2009 representing the six year limitation period for contractual claims. In addition it was advised to question the interest element of over £5,000 and therefore no offer was to be made in respect of this. This offer had been accepted by EDF resulting in a substantial saving.</p> <p>The Solicitors' fees were queried and the Town Clerk advised that they were estimated at £1,900 but had not received the final bill.</p> <p>Members' congratulations on the conclusion of the settlement were given.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the terms of the settlement be noted.</p>
437.	<p><b>Calendar of meetings for 2015/16</b></p> <p>The proposed calendar of meetings had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman proposed the following changes be made:</p> <p>To change the meeting time of the Tourism and Leisure Committee to 2pm, as previously agreed.</p> <p>To change the day and time of the Museum Working Party Meeting to Thursday at 11am and to note that this would be on a 4x weekly basis and that after the first two meetings, would be held at Grove House during the closure of the Museum.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That with the above amendments the Calendar of meetings for 2015/16 be approved.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45 pm.</p>

Signed: ..... Dated: .....  
 Chairman