

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON  
MONDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2017**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 7.45 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Clive Webb (Chairman), Roger Bailey, Mark Canniford, Peter Crew, Peter Fox, Catherine Gibbons, Michal Kus, Richard Nightingale, Lisa Pilgrim and Robert Payne.

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

<b>197</b>	<p><b>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Clive Darke with no substitution.</p>
<b>198</b>	<p><b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
<b>199</b>	<p><b>To approve the minutes of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2017</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 Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p>
<b>200</b>	<p><b>The minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance</b></p> <p>To note the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017 (approved) and 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (unapproved)</p> <p>Both sets of minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>It was noted that the minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017, item 5, page 3 needed to be amended to reflect the word ‘work’ stations.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be noted.</p>
<b>201</b>	<p><b>Grove House Extension</b></p>

At their meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017, the Expenditure & Governance Working Party recommended approval of the two storey extension plans for Grove House.

The proposed extension plans were available to view at the meeting.

The Town Clerk reminded members of the background of the extension request and clarified that the estimated cost of the two storey extension which was in keeping with the building was £135,000. The extension would enable 7 workstations, a reception counter, 1 private interview room, a DDA compliant toilet on the ground floor and a male and female toilet on the first floor. This would allow the release of Grove Lodge at an annual rent of £5,000 per year plus rates. It would enable all central staff to work in one building which would improve communications and enhance service provision. Both Grove House and Grove Lodge were very pushed for space with staff desk hopping and sharing.

The Responsible Financial Officer had made enquires to the Public Works Loan Board and a loan would be available if the council decided to pursue the project.

Debate ensued. It was suggested that if the council needed to expand because of the additional services it had taken on from North Somerset Council, then it was North Somerset Council who should be providing bigger premises.

It was inevitable that the town council would have to expand its services to cover the cuts made by the unitary authority and so with expansion of service comes extension of staff and premises. The council needed to make the most of the plot space available and so conversion of the garage should also be considered within the extension plans.

It was highlighted that Grove House was not a listed building but was within a conservation area and so approval of the plans was not going to be straight forward. The costs and plans for the project needed to be correct before any decision could be made.

A member suggested obtaining a view from the council's North Somerset Council liaison officer. The Town Clerk informed that he had obtained verbal approval of the single storey extension plans.

Lone working issues in both buildings would be alleviated if the extension was approved. The two storey plans that members requested were a starting point. It was now up to the committee to decide how and when to pursue it.

The committee were reminded that the decision to extend had already been previously approved by them and that it was now a case of when it should be done. The committee should look upon the extension favourably as the council was only ever likely to expand. Exact costings were imperative so not to impact on residents.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Grove House had a 25 year lease with

	<p>around 23 years left.</p> <p>Debate ensued regarding the inevitability of expansion.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the two storey extensions plans be referred back to the Expenditure &amp; Governance Woking Party for further consideration.</li> <li>2. To invite the North Somerset Council Liaison Officer to a meeting to discuss the issues.</li> <li>3. That a staff needs assessment be undertaken to ensure any plans would meet the needs of the council and the plans be submitted to the planning department.</li> <li>4. To obtain full exact costings for the project in order to make a recommendation to Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017 if necessary due to changes to the plans, acknowledging the current plans had been fully costed by the councils appointed Quantity surveyor</li> </ol>
<p>202</p>	<p><b>Monthly Financial Reports: July &amp; August 2017</b></p> <p><b>a) For Approval</b>  Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for July &amp; August 2017 be approved.</p> <p><b>b) For Noting</b></p> <ol 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. Income Analysis</li> <li>vi. Overspend Month end report</li> <li>vii. Bad debt report</li> </ol> <p>Member's instruction was requested with regards to report vii: Bad debt report. There were two cases of bad debt.</p> <p>Bad debt 1 was in relation to a broken window at the Museum at the value of £100.00.</p>

	<p>The Responsible Financial Officer informed that the debtor had been very difficult to locate, despite approaching the council and the police after the incident had taken place.</p> <p>Bad debt 2 was in relation to a Love Weston silver package at the value of £180.00.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Tourism &amp; Leisure Committee informed that it was due to a procedural problem which would be discussed further.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That reports 7b i – vi for July &amp; August 2017 be noted.</li> <li>2. That report vii Bad debts 1 be written off by the council and Bad debt 2 to be pursued as per the bad debt policy.</li> </ol>
<p><b>203</b></p>	<p><b>Lloyds Bank</b></p> <p>The terms and conditions of the Commercial Banking Application had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised that the signing authority section 9, page 5 needed to be officially noted.</p> <p>A member queried the voting system of which the Responsible Financial Officer explained.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the terms and conditions of the Commercial Banking Application be approved and signed by authorised signatories.</p>
<p><b>204</b></p>	<p><b>Audited Accounts for year 2016/17</b></p> <p>The external auditor’s certificate included within the annual return had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised that section 3, page 4 of the report needed to be officially noted.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To receive and note the Audited Accounts for year</p>

	2016/17.
205	<p><b>Internal audit 2017/18</b></p> <p>The first interim report of the internal auditor and the covering report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The report outlined areas that were identified by the Auditor to review and the appropriate actions to be taken.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve and note the action plan recommended within the first interim report of the internal auditor.</p>
206	<p><b>Procurement of a new mower</b></p> <p>The report of the Grounds Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The report sought the committee’s approval to renew the contract hire arrangement with TH White for a ride on mower.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised that the request was outside of the budget setting process due to timing of the current lease expiration date. Members were recommended to either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the contract hire of the new machine in line with the details identified in the report within this financial year 2017 / 2018, or:</li> <li>2. Approve the purchase of the current machine for £5000 plus VAT within the current financial year as additional expenditure.</li> </ol> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the Grounds Manager had no preference between the two options.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Clive Webb  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve option 2 of the report to purchase the current machine for £5000 plus VAT if necessary under the current agreement within the current financial year as additional expenditure.</p> <p>In response to a question, the Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the quotes had been negotiated prior to the report submission.</p>

<b>207</b>	<p><b>Blakehay Theatre Studio Charges</b></p> <p>The report of the Blakehay Theatre Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The report explained that in the original Theatre Business Plan the studio space was costed based on Weston College continuing to hire the spaces regularly during term time. The pricing structure had therefore been set out for the studio in 4 hour and 8 hour sessions. Now that the college no longer required the space it was empty most days.</p> <p>However, the theatre had received enquiries to hire the studio on an hourly basis for regular weekly classes. Therefore, it was proposed that the Theatre offer the space at a competitive hourly rate as to be able to hit the income targets for the year on the space.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer reported that she had been working with the Theatre Manager over the last couple of months to come up with options to maximise income for the remainder of the year. A more flexible hourly rate within the current approved charges would be prudent to achieve this. Both the Responsible Financial Officer and the Theatre Manager were confident that space would be hired out which would help fill the void of the loss of the college bookings.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Richard Nightingale  <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></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To adopt the hourly rate of £20/25 per hour for the whole studio for regular classes, for the rest of the 2017/18 financial year.</li> <li>2. To adopt the hourly rate of £15/20 per hour for Studio 2 for meetings, for the rest of the 2017/18 financial year.</li> <li>3. During budget setting for 2018/19 to adopt an hourly rate for all rooms in the theatre.</li> </ol>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.45 pm</p>

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