

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE  
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT THE MUSEUM ON  
MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7:03 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 7:55 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Alan Peak (Chairman) , Mark Canniford, Sarah Codling, Peter Crew (S), Dave Dash, Peter Fox, Robert Payne, Ian Porter and Helen Thornton.

**IN ATTENDANCE :** Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer), Samantha Bishop (Committee & Office Manager ), Fay Powell (Assistant Town Clerk – Operational Services) and three members of the public.

Mr Hebditch (member of the public) addressed the committee with his concerns that he felt the procurement process had not been followed correctly in respect of the contract award for the roof works at 32 Waterloo Street. He had attended the March council meeting where he asked his questions and was told the answers would be responded to in writing. A response had been received the previous week which informed that it had been reported at a meeting held in August 2022 that a saving might be made by combining the tenders for various works on the building. However, he could not see this within the reports and he urged Councillors to recall the decision.

In response, some members recalled it being reported that by combining the tenders, a saving in the management fee would be made.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hebditch for his address and advised that his further questions regarding the procurement process would be answered by the Town Clerk.

<b>358</b>	<b>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lisa Pilgrim who was substituted by Councillor Peter Crew and Tim Taylor with no substitution.
<b>359</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest received.
<b>360</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee Meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Dave Dash <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Ian Porter  A vote was taken and <b>carried</b> . Accordingly, it was:  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

361	<p><b>To approve the minutes of the Special Policy &amp; Finance Sub Committee held on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b></p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Ian Porter <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Alan Peak</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>
362	<p><b>To receive the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b></p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be received.</p>
363	<p><b>To receive the minutes and recommendations of the Climate Change Working Party Meetings held on the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022</b></p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be received.</p>
364	<p><b>To receive the minutes of the HQ Working Party Meetings held on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023</b></p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated.</p> <p>Members were updated that officers had met with scaffolding contractors earlier that day to make sure the visibility of the adjoining businesses would not be compromised and permissions were awaited.</p> <p>Also, that there were problems with the front access ramp application which had been withdrawn and needed resubmitting.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be received.</p>
365	<p><b>Monthly Financial Reports: January &amp; February 2023</b></p> <p><b>a) For Approval</b> Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Sarah Codling <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 &amp; February 2023 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></ul>

- iv. Schedule of Received Income
- v. Bad debt report
- vi. Overspend report

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

It was noted that:

- v. Bad debt had decreased since February and that Visit Weston debts had been written off, all within limits.
- vi. That all insurance and utility costs had been reflected in the overspend report.

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

### 366 Annual Review of Standing Orders

The reference from the Expenditure & Governance Working Party held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and the proposed changes to Standing Orders as requested by some members had been previously circulated.

Debate ensued. A member expressed concerns regarding lessening the frequency of meetings and committee sizes. It was agreed that this would all be considered by the new administration, taking on board these comments.

It was felt that the Annual Town meeting format should be changed as recommended in order to encourage more community involvement.

Discussion moved onto the proposal regarding SO 8.2:

*'Each participant must email or write to the Town Clerk with their name and address and the subject they wish to speak about by 5pm on the day before the meeting and at the discretion of the Chairman shall be allowed to speak for a maximum of five minutes.'*

It was felt by some that this was too short notice and would put members and officers in a difficult position. If not pre-prepared, they would not be able to answer effectively. A situation had arisen at the March meeting where a surprise attack had been made regarding a specific (unnamed) councillor which was unfair. Others said the council needed to demonstrate transparency. It was agreed that meetings needed to be managed effectively by the Chairman of the meeting to avoid these situations.

The Town Clerk informed that North Somerset Council's Standing Orders stated 12 noon the previous day, if members wished to replace his suggestion of 5pm.

*A member of the public joined at 7.28pm.*

It was highlighted that the amendment to standing orders needed to reflect a 'working day' which was generally agreed.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Robert Payne

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew

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

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the proposal for streamlining committees and meeting cycles be referred for consideration by the new Council administration post elections (Town Council July 2023).

Policy & Finance	<p>17<sup>th</sup> April 2023</p> <p>To split the format of holding the Annual Town Meeting (ATM) before the March Council Meeting , in future the ATM to be held on a separate date completely, for a trail run in 2024 and then for review.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. To organise and run a standalone Annual Town Meeting in one of the council's facilities utilising community engagement opportunities and possibly combining with the Mayor's Awards.</li> <li>4. That with the above amendment, to reflect '5pm the <u>working</u> day before', the proposals to change Standing Orders as proposed by E&amp;G be recommended for approval to the Town Council in May and July 2023.</li> </ol>
367	<p><b>North Somerset Council Market Proposal</b></p> <p>The reference from the Expenditure &amp; Governance Working Party held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and proposal from North Somerset Council had been previously circulated.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Robert Payne  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that a successful weekly market would be a good opportunity for Weston, however he advised caution on the possible burden of staff as running a market was quite a complex undertaking with licensing, commercial, financial and safety considerations. Conversations had been held with the Town Centre Partnership as to them managing the market through an existing private market operator.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Members were in support of the proposal and it was noted that a market, had come third in a survey of priorities of the town's people. If it was successful after the first year, then costs could be negotiated with N SC. It was noted that footfall must be considered when siting the market and as it grew in size, would be better sited on the gardens by the High Street and moved into the town square, once established.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk informed that she had spoken with the Town Centre Manager who had agreed to take over management of the market within their current SLA. There would be an element of a admin support required from the Town Council which could be managed and a meeting was needed to discuss finer details. NSC had agreed that all fees would be free of charge and licenses waived for the first year, with fees potentially increasing in future years.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve in principle the proposal from NSC to manage a market in Weston, bringing further information to the committee following feasibility/exploratory discussions with the BID, for a 12-month trial with a review after a 12-month period.</p>
368	<p><b>To approve the EMR for the financial year 2023 / 2024</b></p> <p>The EMR reports and hard copies of a presentation were circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk gave a presentation and informed that the reports recognised what had already been approved in the Medium-Term Financial Plan and the splitting of reserves as follows: General Reserves, Capital Reserves and Earmarked Reserves.</p> <p>Capital Reserves consisted of two big main projects: Castle Batch and 32 Waterloo Street.</p> <p>It was noted that the contingency would be lower for the next financial year and so the</p>

reserves may need to be replenished.

A saving had been made as £60,000 had been budgeted for the Museum NNDR costs which following a successful appeal had come in way under budget.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Sarah Codling

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Helen Thornton

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

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. Approval of the Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) for 2023 to 2024 as reported at: £484,438 to Town Council on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023
2. Approval of the Capital Reserves for 2023 to 2024 as reported at: £658,649 to Town Council on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.52 pm.

Signed.....Dated.....

Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee