

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE MUSEUM ON
MONDAY 21ST FEBRUARY 2022**

Meeting Commenced: 7:00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8:12 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Peak (Chairman), Sarah Codling, Pete Crew (S), Dave Dash, Pete Fox, Robert Payne, Ian Porter and Tim Taylor.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Sonia Russe and John Crockford-Hawley, Malcolm Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO) and Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer/Officer Manager).

326 To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lisa Pilgrim who was substituted by Peter Crew, Mark Canniford and Helen Thornton with no substitutions.

327 To receive Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

328 To approve the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 13th December 2021

The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ian Porter

SECONDED BY: Councillor Dave Dash

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

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

329 The minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held on 6th January 2022 (unapproved) (attached)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held on 6th January 2022 (unapproved) be noted.

330 Monthly Financial Reports: November & December 2021 & January 2022

a) For Approval

Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ian Porter

SECONDED BY: Councillor Pete Crew

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

.1 RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for November & December 2021 & January 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 clarified that the overspend for the Christmas Lights was due to the repair of the Welcome to Weston light situated at Grove Village, which should last a further 3-5 years.

It was noted that the overall insurance expenditure remained the same but had changed between department headings, which resulted in an increase for the Blakehay and the Museum.

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

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

331 Annual Review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk, current Standing Orders and current Financial Regulations had been previously circulated.

Over the course of 2021 / 2022 officers had been working with councillors at the Climate Change Working Group, Expenditure and Governance Working Party and group leaders to introduce measures to have regard for Social Value. The procurement guide, to be discussed later on the agenda, having now worked through and agreed suggested criteria be accepted by this committee.

Once approved, the council's standing orders and financial regulations would need to be updated to reflect the change. The updated document would then be taken to full Town Council for final adoption in March 2022.

A member queried where the substitution scheme featured, to which he was advised that this was within the Committee Terms of Reference.

It was noted that members should be reminded of the substitution scheme for Committees and that upon the election of the new administration (2023), would be a good time to do this.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Ian Porter

SECONDED BY: Councillor Pete Crew

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

RECOMMENDED: To the full Council on 21st March 2022 to note and approve the annual review of the documents (in addition to the council's procurement guide of Social Value).

332 To approve the updated Procurement Guide

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk and updated Procurement Guide had been previously circulated.

For ease of understanding the updates within the document were coloured in red for members to be able to see what had changed.

Extensive research and debate had occurred to enable a relevant guide to the town council's business requirements whilst taking into account the council's aspirations for inclusion of Social Value. Once approved the guide would be issued to all spending officers and consultants who work with the council to prepare tender briefs and who are involved with the tendering process. The formal document would be updated and taken to full Town Council for final adoption in March 2022, with the councils standing orders and financial regulations reflecting the changes.

Members did not want to disadvantage small local businesses from tendering in anyway and, so far as possible within procurement regulations, would offer support to them.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor

SECONDED BY: Councillor Pete Crew

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

RESOLVED: To approve the changes to the Procurement Guide to include social value as required by council.

RECOMMENDED: To the full Council on 21 March 2022 to approve and adopt the inclusion of the Procurement Guide within the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

333 Waterloo Street – Issues and Proposals

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

Since the last report to council with regard to the freehold purchase of the former Mercury Building in Waterloo Street, the conveyancing process had proceeded satisfactorily and the council was in a position to exchange contracts and set a completion date. However, it had been recommended by the council's Building Surveyor that further structural engineer surveys and costings be undertaken as outlined within the report and, of which, the reports had been emailed to members.

The structural engineer's findings indicated that the roof tiles would need replacing and the tower gables rebuilding in the near future, estimated at a minimum cost of £50,000. This was in addition to the sums the council had already budgeted for the project.

The Surveyor had advised that these works would needed to be undertaken either this Summer 2022, or at the latest by next Spring 2023.

Three options suggested were within the report summary, namely to withdrawn, to go ahead, or to seek to renegotiate (but be prepared to walk away if unsuccessful).

The Town Clerk therefore recommended a renegotiation on the purchase price of the premises.

Debate ensued regarding the repair costs and the council's shortfall in budget provision.

In answer to a question the Deputy Town Clerk advised that if the council did not succeed in fully reducing the purchase price, then the shortfall could be funded from general reserves.

A member enquired into the possibility of town centre regeneration grant funding for an iconic building. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Heritage Action Zone grant deadline had lapsed but there were possible future grant funding opportunities with English Heritage.

The committee felt that negotiation on the purchase price was required and the council were in a strong position to negotiate as cash buyers. The agents had received the structural engineer's reports and would be expecting a negotiation.

It was reported that there needed to be some evidence of public consultation undertaken for the PWLB loan, which was in hand.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Fox
SECONDED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling

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

RESOLVED: That option a. of the report be approved, namely that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee and the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the HQ Working Party, seek to renegotiate the purchase price, being prepared to walk away from the transaction. Should agreement be reached then contracts to be exchanged.

334 To approve the Community Events Grant application and guidelines

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk, the Community Events Grant application and guidelines had been previously circulated.

A grant application had been created which linked into other grant funders such as the Arts Council. The remaining 2022/2023 budget was £40,000 and there was an opportunity for a further £40,000 from North Somerset Council of which they would be happy for the town council to administer. This was an overall potential budget of £80,000.

The budget was originally put in place in 2020 / 2021 with aspirations to enable large scale cultural and high impact events within Weston super Mare that would increase footfall to the area and therefore would help boost the economy of the town and was linked to two of the town council's strategy pillars. The application and supporting guidance attached had been developed and reviewed by the working group and was considered appropriate for use. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of HAC had endorsed approval and therefore recommend approval to the Policy and Finance Committee.

There was opportunity to utilise the application immediately with the upcoming opportunities being developed in the town which include (but are not exclusive to) the SEE

Monster installation in the summer of 2022, with this in mind applications may need to be considered by the council ahead of the new financial year.

The Town Clerk recommended an amendment in relation to the Criteria for determination of grant applications namely that the first criterion for determination of applications should be whether the event will achieve the success criteria, namely the:

1. Number of beneficiaries (participants and audiences) engaging in the activity
2. Inward investment - value of match funding secured from other sources to enable activity in Weston-super-Mare.
3. Number of paid employment opportunities created for local artists/ creatives/ freelancers.

In answer to a question it was clarified that volunteer involvement was covered under Q5 & 13.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Sarah Codling

SECONDED BY: Councillor Ian Porter

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

RESOLVED: With the above amendment, to approve the application and guidance documents recommended by the working group and chairman and vice chairman of HAC for immediate use.

*It was **resolved** 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.*

335 Conclusion of Barcode Legal Claim

The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated.

It was reported that, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, the claim has now been satisfactorily settled. Not only had the claim been withdrawn but the claimants had agreed to pay £5,000 towards the council's legal costs.

The settlement would preclude any further arising costs or claims

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

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.12 pm

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