

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE MUSEUM ON
MONDAY 14TH AUGUST 2023**

Meeting Commenced: 7:01 pmxx**Meeting Concluded:** 8.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Peak, Roger Bailey (S), Gill Bute, Mark Canniford John Crockford-Hawley, Robert Payne, Lisa Pilgrim, Tim Taylor, Helen Thornton , Richard Tucker (S) and Martin Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE : Councillor Peter Crew, Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer) , Samantha Bishop (Committee & Officer Manager), Molly Maher (Senior Development Officer).

108	<p>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hugh Malyan who was substituted by Richard Tucker and Martin Williams who was substituted by Roger Bailey.</p>
109	<p>To receive Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were none received.</p>
110	<p>To approve the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on the 19th June 2023</p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>It was noted on page2, minute number 34 that Councillor Mark Canniford seconded the proposal.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Robert Payne SECONDED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That with the above amendment, the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p>
111	<p>To receive the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held on 13th July 2023</p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the E&G Working Party Meeting held on the 13th July 2023 (unapproved) be noted.</p>

<p>Policy & Finance 140829</p> <p>112</p>	<p>To receive the minutes of the HQ Working Party Meetings held on the 28th July 2023</p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the HQ Working Party Meeting held on the 28th July 2023 (unapproved) be noted.</p>
<p>113</p>	<p>Monthly Financial Reports: May & June 2023</p> <p>a) For Approval Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>.1 RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for May & June 2023 be approved.</p> <p>b) For Noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bank Reconciliations ii. Budgetary Control Report iii. Bank Interest Report iv. Schedule of Receipted Income v. Bad debt report vi. Overspend report <p>In response to a question regarding bad debt. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that a majority of April's debts had now been cleared and that long standing debts were with county court. It was noted that tourism debts had now been written off in agreement with by the new Tourism Manager and theatre debts were misleading as Weston college & Oppits had a box office split arrangement and so debts would not be cleared until tickets sales.</p> <p>Members were advised that the council did review its bank accounts to try and obtain the most competitive interest rates from a list of approved providers and were trying to open a bank account with Nationwide. This would be reported at the next meeting in Sept.</p> <p>.2 RESOLVED: That reports 5b i – vi be noted.</p>
<p>114</p>	<p>To consider rejoining NALC and ALCA – Reference from Town Council</p> <p>The minute extract from the Town Council meeting on 24th July had been previously circulated together with the PowerPoint presentation slides from NALC.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk had done some work listing the current subscriptions the council had to identify any crossovers with the Town Clerk. There was crossover with legal and HR advice and it was noted that a lot of advice was found through contacts and good will.</p> <p>NALC offered a large scope of advice, but could not represent the council in court on any tribunal cases, as did the council's HR provider. It was noted that the council employed</p>

<p>Policy & Finance 140823</p>	<p>Protection Officer and was a member of the ICCM (Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management). There was a possibility of money being saved, but the council could not cancel their current subscriptions as a result of becoming NALC members.</p> <p>Members were agreed that the current membership offer from NALC represented good value for money at £1978, which tied the council in for 1 year. However, would like to see measurement objectives in place to evaluate after 1 year, before renewal.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Gill Bute SECONDED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: To accept the offer from NALC/ALCA to become members, for review within 1year.</p>
<p>115</p>	<p>References from other Committees</p> <p>.1 Tourism and Leisure Committee – 13th June - minute extract previously circulated.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Tourism & Leisure Committee was in attendance and was invited to report that the BID supported the £99 package to encourage small businesses on board after the effects of the pandemic. The BID would advertise to all its members and the businesses would get advertising representative of their package, in the hope to upgrade in the future.</p> <p>A comment was posed by a member, asking if the council had asked the tourism industry if what the council offered, was worthwhile to which debate ensued.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey SECONDED BY: Councillor Gill Bute</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 That the new partnership programme be adopted and be implemented with immediate effect. 1.2 To continue to explore options for a ‘pop up’ VIC within the Sovereign centre for the upcoming 6 weeks school holidays 2023, any implementation must come from existing marketing budgets only having full consideration for all cost implications to do so. 1.3 To approve the introduction of a new charge ‘new partner’ programme charge of £99 (one time offer) for implementation on approval in summer 2023. <p>.2 Expenditure & Governance Working Party – 13th July minute extract – minute extract previously circulated.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Robert Payne SECONDED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor</p> <p>It was noted that the NNDR costs for the Museum had been claimed back</p>

<p>Policy & Finance Committee</p>	<p>115,000 which would help replenish the council's general reserves. A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>2.1 To formally confirm there was no conflict of interest with the newly appointed External Auditor and for the necessary paperwork to be signed.</p> <p>2.2 To approve the extension of the current Internal Audit to complete the year 's internal audit and year end requirements for 2023 /2024.</p> <p>2.3 Work with Deputy Town Clerk / RFO to review and produce a programme of works to be included in the procurement of new services during 2023/2024 for commencement in 2024/2025.</p> <p>2.4 To approve that the effectiveness, independence and program for the year 2023 / 2024.</p>
<p>116</p>	<p>Social Value Review</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated which reported that in 2021, at the request of councillors the Council resolved to introduce a Social Value Policy and include this element in all council procurement</p> <p>Unfortunately, after several large procurement exercises, it appears that the Social Value element was causing difficulties in practice for small and medium local businesses (SMEs). While large companies, particularly those who deal regularly with principal councils, have the staff and resources to fill in questionnaires about social value, small local businesses tend to be baffled by questions for example about local employment, crime reduction of community engagement.</p> <p>As a result, there have been cases where small local businesses which the council has used in the past and which have offered good value and local employment have missed out on contracts in favour of larger companies that can answer the social value questions.</p> <p>It was found that the social value questions were very hard to respond to for some types of contracts, e.g. for professional services. For example, the council recently procured a quantity surveyor on a call off contract. While Social Value was extensively used by county and district councils, they had much bigger contracts and specialist procurement departments to manage the process. Enquiries on the town clerks ' network had been made and has not been able to identify any town or large parish councils who use social value as a scored metric in their procurement.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk concurred and advised that the recent rounds of procurement had been really difficult and there was a need to look at thresholds, social value questions and how the scoring measurements applied for this to improve.</p> <p>Members were concerned that the process was knocking out local businesses to tender and approved the concept of a review. However, were concerned about the process of doing this based on the last time this was considered.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk acknowledged this and agreed that a n intense review would be undertaken by the Expenditure & Governance Working Party, and only recommended to the Policy & Finance Committee once, for approval.</p>

Policy & Finance 140823	<p>Members were still concerned about the lack of definition and understanding of Social Value, which needed to be addresses as part of the review. It was suggested that NALC could be consulted to advise on Social Value as a first item of business and trial for measurement.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Tim Taylor SECONDED BY: Councillor Helen Thornton</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To authorise the Expenditure & Governance Working Party to review and agree amendments to the Social Value elements in the Procurement Guide to ensure they are proportionate and workable for smaller contracts and small local businesses. 2. To consult NALC to advise the council on the subject of Social Value.
117	<p>Insurance Savings following Procurement Exercise 2023</p> <p>The report of the Deputy Town Clerk had been previously circulated which reported that Officers were asked to do some further work with the appointed Insurance provider to see if further costs savings could be made following the procurement exercise and subsequent appointment of James Hallam.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk has been in negotiation with James Hallam to review this with the objective of trying to reduce the considerable increase in cost to the council. A summary received from James Hallam had now been received for members to consider as outlined within the report.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk summarised the comments which recommended that whatever the premium saving, to stay with the insurer who provided flood cover and by placing the policy in a different way, the council can save £4,741.37.</p> <p>Members requested to see a bus shelter review , to which the Deputy Town Clerk advised that she would be working with the Grounds Manager to review all the council 's street furniture.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Robert Payne SECONDED BY: Councillor Gill Bute</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried Accordingly, it was</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the revised costs and saving of £4,741.37 (section 1.0 of report) 2. Approve excess levels and offers provided by Ecclesiastical (section 2.0 of report at £5,000). 3. Approve excess levels and offers provided by Aviva (section 3.0 of report at £250). 4. Approve the 3-year option to secure insurance provision at known costs for the next 3 years.
118	<p>Quarry Ace Grant Application 5</p>

The report of the Deputy Town Clerk / Senior Development Officer had been previously circulated which required members to note the following:

The Arts Council England opened thier Capital Investment Programme for Expressions of Interest in June. The fund was brought to the council 's attention by North Somerset Council who suggested exploration of suitability for funding for the Quarry redevelopment.

The funding was specifically for organisations to adjust buildings, equipment and other assets so that they can operate safely post-pandemic, improve access, seize on technological opportunities, and reduce environmental impact. The council applied with its partners listed as North Somerset Council, The Stables CIC and Culture Weston and applied for £500,000. At this level of funding the council were required to demonstrate 15% match funding. As there was already £200,000 allocated in the Community Infrastructure Levy funding, the actual contribution to the full project cost was 28%.

Unfortunately, the council received confirmation that we were unsuccessful with our expression of interest and were not invited to submit a full application. The Arts Council England do not offer individual feedback, but the reason cited is as follows:

Demand for the Capital Investment Programme has been extremely high, with a large number of applicants demonstrating the ability to meet the programme aims. As a result, we had to make some difficult decisions about which applicants to invite through to the full application stage. We want to ensure that applicants do not spend time and resources completing an application where there is very limited chance of success and, on balance, we viewed other projects as being more likely to make a strong contribution to the programme aims.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the council were still in the same position financially, requiring £200,000 for the quarry and will continue to identify funding opportunities where possible. It was reiterated that there was an absolute need to review capital funding and financial resources prior to taking on the quarry to be assured of financial viability and business planning for the site.

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

RESOLVED: To note the funding has not been received.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 pm

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