

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

ON MONDAY 20 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillor Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Lisa Bird (Deputy Town Mayor), Gloria Martin (Chairman) Philip Crawley (Vice-Chairman), Wendy Bater, Matthew Brennan, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick,

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager), Jack Adams-Rimmer (Senior Neighbourhood Development Officer, remotely) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Sid Abbott and Cameron Restall

Public Attendance: Nil

105. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24 January and 21 March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

106. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no specific declarations of interest.

107. REFERRAL REPORTS

The Committee was requested to consider the following reports as follows;

- (a) referral from the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee relating to the release of up to £14,870 from the earmarked Vehicle and Equipment Reserve

RESOLVED: that the release of up to £14,870 from the earmarked Vehicle and Equipment Reserve be approved to purchase a gang mower

The Committee was requested to consider the following reports as follows;

- (b) referral from the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee relating to the release of up to £3,800 from the earmarked Vehicle and Equipment Reserve to purchase a 1,125litre watering bowser

RESOLVED: that the release of up to £3,800 from the earmarked Vehicle and Equipment Reserve be approved to purchase a watering bowser

The Committee was requested to consider the following reports as follows;

- (c) referral from the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee relating to the release of up to £20,000- in 2022/23 and further earmarked reserves of up to 22,800 in subsequent years from the earmarked Allotment Reserve

RESOLVED: that the release of up to £20,000 and further earmarked capital reserves of up to £22,800 in subsequent years to enable the approved allotment programme detailed in the report from the earmarked Allotment Reserve be approved

- (d) referral from the Community Services Committee for the release of up to £60,000 from the Priory House Building Reserve to allow for the reconfiguration of the ground floor of Priory House. The Chairman of the Community Services Committee Councillor Peter Hollick outlined to the Committee the benefits of supporting the proposed reconfiguration of the ground floor of Priory House. A discussion then ensued on the appropriateness of supporting such an initiative at this time

RESOLVED: that the proposed release of up to £60,000 from the Priory House Building Reserve to allow for the reconfiguration of the ground floor of Priory House as detailed in the report be not supported at this time

108. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report that provided a revenue budgetary control report for the financial year ending 31 March 2022, details of the year end balances as of 31 March, and details of the earmarked reserves. The Committee also received the final Internal Audit Report and updated Treasury Management Policy. The revenue budget position for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 was noted. The summary showed a potential net revenue underspend at end of financial year of £13,192. This figure includes £82,551 of previously approved commitments from the General Reserve and £39,819 overachievement at Creasey Park CFC being allocated to the CPCFC Reserve.

The Committee noted the current balance of the Council's earmarked reserves as of 28 February 2022. The Committee had been circulated with the second interim 2021/2022 internal audit report. which once again gave the Town Council a clean bill of health. The Officers including Lisa Scheder the Finance and Procurement Manager and Deputy RFO were thanked for their work over the year

RESOLVED: (1) that the financial reports from 1 April to 31 March 2022 be noted as well as the year end balances and earmarked reserves

(2) that the Committee noted with satisfaction that Internal Audit once again gave the Council a clean bill of health

(3) that the Updated Treasury Management Policy which now includes a recommendation to maintain an adequate general balance (reserve) be approved and adopted

109. MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee considered a report on the Town Councils' marketing and communication plans. It was noted the website was continuing to see more visitors. The noticeboards were being regularly checked and updated. It was further reported that a newsletter for staff was being worked on as part of the Investors in People improvement plan.

110. DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

The Committee considered a report promoting the adoption of a Domestic Abuse Policy. It was noted that the Council's Senior Management Team was continually considering ways in which to improve management of the organisation and its employees.

Officers identified there was a gap regarding a domestic abuse policy. This was through Central Bedfordshire Council approaching officers to identify 'safe spaces' for victims of domestic violence should anybody require support. While staff had not raised concerns regarding domestic abuse, it was beneficial for the Council to have a policy in place should this matter arise.

RESOLVED: that the domestic abuse policy as set out in the appendix to the report be adopted

111. DOWNSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE BUILDING REPAIRS

The Committee considered a report which sought the approval of the Committee to release up to £75,000 from the earmarked Pavilions Building Maintenance Reserve to repair the roof, windows and rainwater goods at Downside Community Centre as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: that the release of up to £75,000 from the earmarked Pavilions Building Maintenance Reserve to repair the roof, windows and rainwater goods as detailed in the report be approved

112. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- a) CAB Management Committee – a report was expected at the next meeting
- b) DITA – The Mayor and Councillor Peter Hollick reported on the recent visit to the town by representatives of Porz during the Platinum Jubilee weekend held in June. There were a number of highlights of the visit including a reception held on 4 June, the lighting of the jubilee beacon at Dunstable Downs and watching the Queens Jubilee Concert screened in Priory Gardens
- c) Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Jones reported. Volunteers were busy fundraising, identifying funding sources and supporting local people in their homes
- d) Ashton Alms-houses Charity – Councillor Hollick advised the Committee that he would make a full report at the next meeting

113. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED; To exclude the public and press in accordance with Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1961 S1.2 to allow discussion on matters that affect proposed changes to the Council's Staffing Establishment

114. CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT

The town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a report detailed proposed changes to the Council's staffing establishment. After a full discussion, the following was resolved and recommended:

RECOMMENDED; (i) That the Council approves the promotion of the Finance and Procurement Manager to Head of Finance and in doing so appoints her as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer from 1 August 2022 on the salary grade set out in the report.

RESOLVED; (ii) That the Business Support Manager assumes line management responsibility for the Democratic Services Manager from 1 August 2022 and is moved onto the salary scale set out in the report.

(iii) That the Town Centre Services Officer be re-designated Town Centre Manager and that her working hours be increased to 30 hours per week from 1 July 2022.

(iv) That the Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer's hours be increased to 30 hours per week from 1 July 2022.

The meeting closed at 20.20.