

AGENDA ITEM 7
DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

ON MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2022

Present: Councillor Liz Jones (Town Mayor), Lisa Bird (Deputy Town Mayor), Gloria Martin (Chairman), Philip Crawley (Vice-Chairman), Sid Abbott, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney and Peter Hollick

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Head of Finance and Responsible Financial Officer), John Crawley (Head of Grounds and Environmental Services) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies: Councillors Wendy Bater, Mark Cant, Cameron Restall and Lee Roberts

Public Attendance: Nil

192 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 26 September 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

193 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received

194 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Head of Finance and Responsible Financial Officer presented the financial monitoring report for the period ending 30 September 2022. The Committee also noted details of the Council's earmarked reserves as of 31 October 2022.

The Head of Finance and Responsible Financial Officer made members aware of the current financial position the Council was in. The summary showed a potential net revenue underspend at the end of the financial year of £42,069. It was noted that this took into account the £50,000 contribution from the general reserve agreed.

RESOLVED: That the above reports be noted

195 BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2023/24

The Committee noted the budget proposal would be also considered at the meeting of the Committee in January. It was noted that officers had already undertaken during the Community Services Committee to provide a separate report regarding the current earmarked reserves and any possible savings for the coming year with the next round of committee papers.

In considering the report the Committee noted; the national pay agreement of £1,925 for all staff; the position of General Reserves.

The following were discussed;

- The provision of three editions of Talk of The Town rather than four – printing and distribution
- Root and branch review of all services
- The use of General Reserves
- Energy efficiency

196 CIVILITY AND RESPECT PROJECT

The Committee considered a report that explained that the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Councils were carrying out a programme of works to address the issues of bullying and disrespect in the sector. These national organisations believed it was time to put civility and respect at the top of the national agenda to start a culture change for the local council sector. All local councils were being asked to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge. It was understood that by signing up to the pledge the Council was committed to treating councillors, clerks, employees members of the public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect.

RESOLVED: That the Full Council be recommended to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge

197 CONSTITUTION WORKING GROUP

The Committee considered a report asking it to establish a Working Group of Councillors to review the Council's current constitution, consider officer recommendations for changes and provide any proposed changes to the Committee for agreement in March 2023.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Committee approves the establishment of a Working Group to review the Council's constitution Standing Orders etc
(2) That Councillors Gloria Martin, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Peter Hollick and Liz Jones be appointed to the Working Group
(3) That the Council be invited to appoint an additional Member

198 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Committee considered a report on the Town Council's marketing and communication activities. The Committee welcomed the report and discussed issues as follows;

- Social media channels had continued to see significant growth
- Talk of the Town – a review of paid advertising was suggested

RESOLVED: That the Committee welcomes the report and acknowledges the work of the Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer.

199 ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING AND MAYOR MAKING

The Committee noted the venue for the Annual Council meeting and Mayor Making Ceremony to be held on 15 May 2023. It was noted that the likely venue would once again be the Dunstable Conference Centre.

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The Committee welcomed the report and noted the event would be made by officers based on previous events. The Committee was happy to support the use of the Dunstable Conference Centre subject to the stage was not used as part of the ceremony.

200 MEADWAY CAPITAL FUNDS PROPOSALS

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the report. He also reported that the Grounds and Environmental Services Committee at its meeting in November had resolved to make recommendations to this Committee on the use of Meadway funding. The Committee was reminded that the sale of land at Meadway had resulted in the Town Council receiving a sum of £500,000 from the sale of land. The Committee was now invited to make recommendations to Council to allocate the capital receipt for the schemes listed in the report.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Committee recommends to Full Council the creation of ear-marked reserves from the £500,000 capital receipt as follows:

- (i) White Lion land landscaping this allocation subject to the free transfer of land from Luton Borough Council - £10,000
- (ii) Luton Road Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) as detailed in the recommendation from the GES Committee and would be undertaken alongside a refurbishment of the play area - £100,000.
- (iii) New cemetery design and development and creation of a Cemetery Development Reserve - £75,000
- (iv) Street Dressing re-usable banners etc for use such as for the Coronation - £18,000
- (v) Depot extension (Additional floor to be added to the current staff facility £100,000 earmarked reserve – implementation subject to the results of the long term management of Creasey Park Community Football Club

RESOLVED: (2) That the Committee recommends to Full Council the creation of an ear-marked reserve of £74,000 for the repair of the Downside Community Roof, using funds from the General Reserve.

The Committee decided to defer making decisions on the following proposals, pending further information:

- (vi) Priory House Furniture (to be installed following completion of works - £27,000
- (vii) Provision of 16 full sized plots (or 32 half sized plots) at Downside Recreation Ground Development reserve - £75,000
- (viii) Roof repairs and changing room revitalisation of the Luton Road pavilion - £170,00

201 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- a) Citizen's Advice Management Committee – No report

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- b) Dunstable International Twinning Association (DITA) – Councillor Peter Hollick reported on that on Friday the Town Council would be assisting DITA in planting two cherry trees donated by the visitors from Porz in the Summer.
- c) Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Jones reported on activities such as renewing risk assessments, refreshing its constitution and maximising grant opportunities.
- d) Ashton Alms-houses Charity - Councillor Hollick advised the Committee of a new resident taking up residence. There was one flat vacant at the moment.
- e) It was agreed all organisations that have Town Councillor representation be listed on the agenda so Members have an opportunity to make appropriate reports.

The meeting closed at 21.05