

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Finance, Policy and Governance Committee

Minutes for the meeting to be held on Thursday 28th April 2017 at 7.45pm at the Sandbach Literary Institution, Hightown.

In Attendance:

- Cllr Steve Kirkham
- Cllr Mike Benson
- Cllr Gill Merry
- Cllr Mike Muldoon
- Cllr Barry Moran
- Cllr Carolyn Lowe
- Cllr Sam Corcoran
- Cllr Richard Hovey
- Cllr Alan Smith

Also present were the Town Clerk, the Finance Officer and 3 members of the public

1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Cllr Gill Merry be appointed as Chair

2. APPOINTMENT OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Cllr Steve Kirkham be appointed as Vice Chair

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllr Martin Forster
Cllr Bleddyn Davies

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

COMMITTEE CO-OPTION

The supplementary item was brought forward.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Sue Ashcombe-Hurt be cop-opted on the committee

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of interested were received from:

Cllr Sam Corcoran: 8.2 Grant application, as a Board of the Directors, and that he would leave the room for this item.

Cllr Carolyn Lowe and Cllr Gill Merry: Non pecuniary interest in 8.1 as members of Sandbach Clean Team.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow questions from members of the public, as there were none, the meeting was reconvened.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 28TH APRIL 2017.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved.

6. FINANCIAL STATEMENT – FIRST QUARTER 2017-2018

[Attached: Detailed Income and Expenditure Cost Centre Report and Bank Reconciliation]

The results were discussed:

The line 4840/180 Refreshment Purchases in Town Hall was highlighted as it was over budget. It was noted that a new buffet service had been introduced and costs are posted to this line, the costs are recharge to customers. It was requested that the Finance Office create a new nominal code for this item so this service can be monitored to see how well it is working.

4820 Community events was raised, it was confirmed that the amount was costs and that income was posted in month 4 which will appear in the next quarter results.

The surplus in the annual budget was highlighted as it was relevant to an item being discussed later in the meeting. Clarification was given that the budget is set and that the actuals may change, but the budget will not.

A request was made to make changes to the variance report.

RESOLVED: That the first quarter results be approved.

7. PAYMENTS MADE

[Attached: Schedule of Payments]

RESOLVED: That the payments be approved.

8. APPLICATIONS FOR DONATIONS

8.1 SANDBACH CLEAN TEAM

RESOLVED: That the grant of £1540 over three years be approved, to be paid over a three year period, 2018-19 £520, 2019-20 £500 and 2020-21 £520

8.2 CHESHIRE NEIGHBOURS CREDIT UNION

Cllr Corcoran left the room whilst this item was discussed.

RESOLVED: That the grant of £200 be approved

9. AGED DEBTORS

The aged debtors amount was discussed, and it was noted that a written policy should be in place to say what we should do with potential debtors who do not respond after being chased, and at what point staff are able to make demands

on debtors. It was also noted that the accounting procedures have improved significantly over the last two years, and that this situation should not arise again. The Finance Officer confirmed the breakdowns of the aged debtors, and that aged debtors list is looked at regularly, and is under control.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Council that £7771.31 as detailed on the schedule be written off as unrecoverable debt, and that a Policy and Procedure for the management and collection of debts is to be received by Finance Policy and Governance Committee and then presented to Full Council.

10. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS

Financial Regulations

The draft Financial Regulations were shared for discussion.

Issues and amendments discussed:

4.1	Bullet 3: replace "an item below £1,500" to "items not exceeding £1,500".	Amend
4.5	Limit threshold of £3,000, should this be £5,000 as requested by the Operations Manager.	No change
4.8	£500 and 10%, should this be 15% as was previously?	No change
5.5	Queried if there was a conflict between 4.1? Should the word 'only' be removed?	No change
6.6	Clarify that the two members should be clarified to include "one of whom is a member of the Council".	Amend
6.7	Clarify that the two members should be clarified to include "one of whom is a member of the Council".	Amend
6.10	Include additional words...Council's records on that computer <i>these should be</i> stored separately from the card and reader.	Amend
6.18	Clarification on whether this should read debit, credit or debit/credit card?	No change
8.2	Capitalise F on Full Council	Amend
9.9	VAT returns on a quarterly basis, is this manageable?	No change

RESOLVED: that the Financial Regulations be recommended to Council for adoption with the amendments as agreed above.

Standing Orders

The draft Standing Orders were shared for discussion.

RESOLVED: that Standing Order 7 is suspended to allow amendments to be made which may be in conflict with resolutions of Council that have been carried over the past six months (this vote was taken whilst SO 4(e) was debated).

Issues and amendments discussed.

Doc.	<p>Chairman or Chair?</p> <p>Suggested that a paragraph is included to clarify references to Chairman or Vice-Chairman throughout the document is gender neutral and that references made should be in full, allowing individual office holders to determine how they would like to be addressed.</p> <p>What would members prefer to use/be called?</p>	Amend
3	<p>Include two new bullet points:</p> <p>Member Briefings</p> <p>Working Groups</p> <p>Member Briefings</p> <p>New paragraph proposed which states: <i>Nothing in this paragraph shall prevent arrangements being made for Members to receive an informal briefing in public. A minimum of two such briefings should be held so as to include:</i></p> <p><i>i. discussion of the budget prior to the formal Council meeting fixed for this purpose;</i></p> <p><i>ii. Discussion of Members' appointments prior to the Council Annual Meeting</i></p> <p>Working Groups</p> <p>New paragraph proposed which states: <i>Roles and Responsibilities of Working Groups are set out in general terms within guidance set out in Appendix 1.</i></p>	Amend
3(e)	<p>Amend to read:</p> <p>Standing Orders (a-d) will be applied to the business of Sub-Committees.</p>	Amend
3(f)	<p>Amend to read:</p> <p>Standing Orders (a-c) will be applied to the business of Working Groups</p> <p>To reflect the difference between Committees and Working Groups.</p>	Amend
3(h)	<p>New Standing Order:</p>	Amend

	The Town Clerk may attend any meeting of the Council, it's Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups and may advise and participate as appropriate.	
4(e)vii	Previously appointments of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to Committees have been made at the AGM. Amended FR state that Committee meetings should be held within one month of the AGM to appoint Chairmen/Vice-Chairmen. Subject to the new 'Member Briefings' change, this is no longer necessary and now can be done at the AGM. Propose: amend SO 4(e)vii.	Amend
4(e)vii	Reference tenure of Chairman, insert the words <i>as a general rule</i> would be expected to serve no more than <i>two</i> consecutive years.	Amend
4(e)viii	Remove reference that a Chair of a Sub-Committee need not be a member of the Council.	Amend
4(e)ix	Amend quorum to read <i>four</i> .	Amend
27(a)	Insert <i>Town</i> to read Town Clerk.	Amend

There were some minor typographic amendments and also removal of any Welsh standing orders.

RESOLVED: that the Standing Orders be recommended to Council for adoption with the amendments as agreed above.

11. MARKET HALL FUNDING

The funding possibilities were highlighted, reference was also made to the earlier point that there is an under spend in the annual budget of £54,000. Clarification was sought on various risks that may arise:

General Reserves would be lower than our required minimum: Small risk, the reserves would cover 2 and a half months expenditure rather than 3, it was also pointed out that other reserves do exist. Our internal auditor was contacted and they are happy with reserve dropping and then being put up again.

Phased implementation: This is a reputational risk.

What if the costs came in higher than the outlined budget £146,061? It would be expected that this item would return to Committee or Full Council for approval depending on the amount.

It was also noted there is no guarantee that the whole of the £146,061 is going to be spent this current financial year that there may be slippage in a large project of this nature, and although the committee is being asked to find the money for this project it may not be spent in this financial year.

RESOLVED: To confirm the Full Council that £146,041 is available to spend on the Indoor Market Hall project from: A: £20,000 Budget (4613/191)

B: £50,000 Committed Reserves

C: £76,061 from General Reserves

12. CASH HANDLING POLICY

RESOLVED: That the Cash Handling Policy be noted.

13. GRANT FEEDBACK FORM

RESOLVED: That the feedback be received with thank

14. LETTERS OF THANKS

There were none

15. CORRESPONDENCE

There was none

16. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

There were none

17. UNDISCHARGED RESOLUTIONS

There were none

18. COMMITTEE MEETING START TIME

RESOLVED: That the future meeting start time for Finance policy and Governance will be 7.30pm

19. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee will be 3rd November 2017 at 7.30pm at the Sandbach Literary Institute.

Meeting Closed at 9.26pm

Cllr G Merry

Finance Chair

SVS/AB