



SANDBACH
Town Council

ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes for the meeting to be held on Wednesday, **10th April 2024**
at **7.00pm** in **Sandbach Town Hall**.

Members Present: Cllrs K Flavell (Chair), D Hegarty (Vice Chair), J Arnold, K England, R Gray, D Poole, C Crane (Town Mayor)
Cllr Wheatcroft as a guest.

Committee Clerk: Ceri Lloyd Chief Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Cllrs J Beddows, M Mitchell and A Nevitt. Cllr MacGregor was absent without apology.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No pecuniary & non-pecuniary interests in relation to any item on the agenda were declared.

3. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider items that, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for any items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

Lead: Chair

Resolved: *No items were excluded from press and public.*

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the press or public were present at the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 31ST JANUARY 2024.

[Attached: Draft minutes of the meeting]

Lead: Chair

Action: *The minutes of the Assets & Services Committee meeting held 31st January 2024 were approved as an accurate record.*

5. ASSETS & SERVICES COMMITTEE 2023-24 BUDGET

[Attached: RBS 2023-24 Budget & Actuals March Summary]

Lead: Chair

The Chief Officer confirmed that the year end figures were pointing to an underspend overall. She also highlighted the Council's aim to significantly reduce the combined net cost of the Indoor and Outdoor Market due to more effective management and marketing over the past 2 years.

Resolved: *the actuals against budget position for Assets & Services Committee activities were noted.*

6. TOWN HALL STONE MASONRY

[Attached: Chief Officer Report]

Lead: Chair

The Committee welcomed this proposal which had arisen from the energy efficiency work currently being undertaken. The Chief Officer clarified that once the survey was done this would potentially lead to a formal procurement process for some significant additional restoration work. Cllr Wheatcroft confirmed that the current supplier was sourced through the Building Conservation Directory for skilled suppliers, recommended by Historic England. It was noted that this work would need to be carried out in consultation with the Operations and Events Manager to mitigate disruption. The Chief Officer was asked to ensure positive and informative publicity would be made at the appropriate time.

Resolved: *the immediate stone masonry repair work identified to be commissioned at a cost of £2,177 (excluding VAT) and a masonry condition survey to be undertaken at a cost of £3,485 (excluding VAT) asap, both by StoneCentral, funded by the Town Hall Maintenance earmarked reserve, was approved.*

7. TOWN HALL COMPLEX - ENERGY EFFICIENCY AUDIT

[Attached: Chief Officer Report; Utility Aid Energy Efficiency Audit Report - emailed separately to members]

Lead: Chair

The item was introduced by Cllr Wheatcroft who had organised this much needed review in the context of his role as Climate Change lead. The Committee welcomed the report and thanked Cllr Wheatcroft for his initiative. The Chief Officer confirmed that many aspects of the report would be essential in continuing to develop the Council's asset maintenance strategy in a sustainable way. The Committee accepted the proposal that a potential project to install solar panels, subject to the CEC heritage officer approval, should be developed for consideration by Council.

Resolved:

- i) *the contents of this report were noted;*
- ii) *suggested improvements are explored further by the Chief Officer's office, in consultation with Cllr Wheatcroft, for future consideration and approval where appropriate, as part of a sustainable asset development programme;*

- iii) *a project specification, funded by the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve, is drawn up for consideration by Council (authority to apply this reserve already delegated to the Chief Officer in consultation with CC lead).*

8. SMALL COMMON BARRIER

[Attached: Chief Officer Report; Quotation]

Lead: Chair / Cllr D Hegarty

Cllr Hegarty introduced the item and outlined the process of a small group of officers, himself and Cllr Poole considering alternatives as agreed at the last meeting. Cllr Poole was out of the country for the second of 2 meetings held. There was a robust discussion about the ultimate proposal to replace the bollards with a more substantial and highly visible crash barrier. Cllr Flavell confirmed that the remit of this committee was to consider a replacement for the original bollards, as the car park refurbishment was agreed by Council, and not to attempt to redesign the scheme. An alternative proposal to replace the bollards with a stainless steel frame fell without a seconder. It was agreed that the proposed barrier should be installed after consulting the CEC conservation officer and ensuring that a clear explanation was provided to remind residents the importance of the barrier in that location to improve safety by limiting dangerous parking opportunities and discouraging heavy load vehicles reversing in front of the adjacent shops. The Chief Officer confirmed there was a significant underspend against the original budget from this scheme.

Resolved:

- i) *the research done was noted;*
- ii) *the bollards to be replaced by the recommended crash barrier, subject to the reassurance of the CEC Conservation Officer that no environmental issues would arise from such a design in that location, funded from the small common car park underspend, was approved.*

9. RANGER / PUBLIC REALM UPDATE

[Verbal report from the Chief Officer]

Lead: Chair

The Chief Officer updated the committee regarding various public realm developments. The 3 weed sprays had been commissioned. ANSA had recommended no additional intervention for the cobbles as they felt this would do more harm than good. A 'friends of the cobbles' group was suggested and a polite request to businesses to use (sustainable) plastic outside pubs to prevent safety hazard. The Chief Officer confirmed an imminent meeting with ANSA to secure the bought in part time ranger service now approved by Council.

Resolved: *the verbal update on progress to date was noted.*

10. TOWN HALL / MARKET UPDATE

[Verbal update from Chief Officer]

Lead: Chief Officer

The Chief Officer highlighted the recent report to all members from the Operations and Events Senior Manger which had highlighted the various developments circulated the previous week. Various marketing strategies were now being implemented and were having an impact. For eg. 42 market traders now listed which is the highest number in recent years, at the lowest net cost to the tax payer. The Chief Officer confirmed that the new gazebos were due to be delivered. It was also noted that sadly the cinema operator was retiring imminently and that the Council was hoping to find a replacement asap. The Committee requested that the Council Team be formally thanked for their hard work and successful endeavours.

Resolved:

- i) a verbal update on current issues and performance
- ii) the Committee thanked the team for their hard work

11. ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA FOR PUBLICITY

Lead: Chair

Resolved: *Masonry; Town Hall / Market events; progress on markets business model.*

12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Lead: Chair

Resolved: *None specified*

13. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be confirmed at Council AGM.

Meeting closed