



Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held at the Town Hall, High Street, Chippenham on 11 December 2019 at 7pm.

Councillors present:

Desna Allen	Pete Bishop
Jenny Budgell (Vice)	Peter Hutton
Teresa Hutton	Mary Norton
Andy Phillips	David Powell (substitute)
John Scragg	Sandie Webb (Chairman)

Officers present: Mark Smith, Chief Executive
Nick Rees, Director of Resources
Barry Pirie, Director of Community Services
Gillian Ballinger, Finance Manager
Lynsey Nichols, Communications and Customer Services Manager
Heather Rae, Democratic Services Manager
Michael Weeks, Democratic and Civic Officer

Public present: There was one member of the public present.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no written or verbal questions from any member of the public.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors James Adman and Clare Cape.

48. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTION

Councillor David Powell substituting for Councillor Clare Cape.

49. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

50. MINUTES

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2019 were a correct record and

RESOLVED that:

The minutes were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

51. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

i) The Chairman congratulated Councillors who worked with great detail in the Finance Working Party considering all aspects of the budget and to the Director of Resources and Councillor Jenny Budgell who had chaired the Finance Working Party.

ii) The Chairman highlighted the fact that a 1% variation in the budget raises £29,485 per year and yet costs just an extra £2.39 a year to a Band D household and that any other suggestions by councillors to the proposed increase should be fully costed.

iii) The Chairman noted that Councillors had been requested to submit questions in advance relating to agenda items 10 and 11, it was noted that two questions were submitted in advance and both had received written responses.

52. SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

i) COMMUNITY DONATIONS SUB COMMITTEE

Councillors noted the minutes from the Community Donations Sub Committee meeting dated 17 October 2019 and the recommendations therein and all matters were resolved.

53. WORKING PARTY NOTES

i) FINANCE WORKING PARTY NOTES

Councillors noted the Finance Working Party notes from the meetings held on 14 November and 02 December 2019 and the recommendations were outlined in agenda items 10 and 11/Minutes 56 and 57 refer.

54. ADVISORY GROUP NOTES

i) CLIMATE EMERGENCY ADVISORY GROUP NOTES

Councillors noted Climate Emergency Advisory Group notes from the meeting held on 20 November 2019 and the recommendations therein and all matters were resolved.

55. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION FOR 2019/20

The Director of Resources presented the report on financial administration for 2019/20.

RESOLVED that:

Councillors noted the report.

56. TO RATIFY FEES AND CHARGES

The Director of Resources presented the report regarding the proposed Fees and Charges for 2020/21. It was noted that the Fees and Charges had gone to the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee with one anomaly regarding cemetery fees. The fees had been updated to include the Children's Funeral Fund legislation, they had been previously circulated to members of the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee and included in the recommended Fees and Charges to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

It was noted that the majority of Fees and Charges had increased by the current Retail Price Index, around 2.4%. It was noted that there had been no increase in room hire at Stanley Park to encourage community hire and no increase in the cost hanging baskets and Christmas trees which enhance the town centre.

All were in favour and it was

RESOLVED that: Councillors agreed the Fees and Charges for incorporation into the Council's budget for 2020/21 and are applicable fees for the Town Council for 2020/21.

57. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT BUDGET AND PRECEPT 20/21 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (MTFP)

The Director of Resources presented the report to Councillors regarding the draft budget and precept for 2020/21 and the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). It was highlighted that the Finance Working Party had met four times this year to consider the budget and the MTFP. The Director of Resources explained that the precept income would need to increase by 6% alone to address historical issues and with the addition of inflation this would be a total of 9.8%.

The Director of Resources recommended a policy be adopted to maintain General Reserves as a ratio of the current year's Precept at 25% which is the minimum recommended percentage for the sector. The Working Party had considered this and determined this would have to come out of Earmarked Funds and Capital Reserves. An £88,000 transfer from income and expenditure into Capital Funds reflects 3% of the proposed precept. It was noted in the context of the 5-Year MTFP, precept increases were likely to be lower in future years.

Councillor Jenny Budgell thanked all the members of the Finance Working Party and all Officers that had been involved in the process. It was noted that the Capital Funds replacing Earmarked Funds demonstrated a long term plan of what to spend on Capital and that other Committees and groups would be involved in the details.

Councillor Peter Hutton stated that whilst acknowledging the work that had been done he would not support the proposed precept and was mindful it may be too

high for residents. Councillor Peter Hutton noted that the proposed precept for future years in the MTFP was quite low and this might not be deliverable.

The Chairman noted that all Councillors were given the opportunity to join the Finance Working Party, which had made a recommendation from basic facts and that the MTFP projected precept was indicative.

Councillor Jenny Budgell highlighted that a lot of time had been spent on the proposed budget and MTFP and that Councillors are all custodians of the funds of the Council for the residents of Chippenham. If a lower precept was decided, the Council would not be able to provide what they do currently.

Councillors voted on each of the recommendations individually and it was

RESOLVED that:

i) Councillors formally adopt a policy to maintain General Reserves as a ratio of current year's Precept at 25%. All were in favour.

ii) The budget for 2020/21 and a precept of £3,236,261 be proposed to Full Council at its meeting on 15 January 2020. Eight were in favour with two against.

iii) The 5-Year Medium Term Financial Plan 2020 - 2025 for Income & Expenditure and Capital be recommended to Full Council at its meeting on 15 January 2020. Eight were in favour with two abstentions.

iv) The Finance Working Party continues to meet. All were in favour.

v) Members of the S&R Committee determine the Capital Expenditure Programme for 2020/21 and the remainder of the MTFP such that ACL recommends what capital expenditure against the Capital Fund is required, S&R decides what can be afforded, how it should be financed and what level of Capital Fund should be maintained, with the Finance Working Party looking into any detailed policy recommendations. All were in favour.

58. ADDITIONAL OFFICERS TO THE BANK MANDATE AND CHANGES TO AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES

The Director of Resources presented the report to Councillors noting that there were currently two signatories on the Lloyds Bank Business Account, the Director of Resources and the Chief Executive. It was recommended that the Director of Community Services be added and the Finance Manager be added with a limit of £1000. The Director of Resources recommended three further changes to authorised signatories for the approval of expenditure.

With all in favour it was

RESOLVED that:

i) Councillors agreed to the following changes to the Lloyds Bank Business Account bank mandate:

- Addition of Director of Community Services;
- Addition of Finance Manager, subject to a limit of £1,000.

ii) Councillors agreed to the following changes to the Delegated Authorisation Spending list:

- Increase Finance Manager authorised level from £1,500 to £5,000
- Increase Democratic Services Manager authorised level from £1,000 to £1,500
- Add Democratic & Civic Officer to the Delegated Authorisation Spending list at an authorised level of £1,000

59. INTERNAL AUDIT

The Director of Resources presented the report to Councillors regarding the Internal Audit report.

RESOLVED that:

Councillors noted the report.

60. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION

Councillors did not request any specific items for communication.

61. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of this Committee will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 19 February 2020.

The meeting concluded at 7.35pm

These Minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting

Signed on behalf of the Committee as a true record of the meeting

Chairman:

Date: