



Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held virtually on Zoom on 09 December 2020 at 7pm.

**Councillors present:**

James Adman	Desna Allen
Pete Bishop	Jenny Budgell (Vice)
Peter Hutton	Teresa Hutton
Andy Phillips	John Scragg
Sandie Webb (Chairman)	

**Officers present:** Mark Smith, Chief Executive  
Nick Rees, Director of Resources  
Matt Kirby, Director of Community Services  
Daryl Jones, Business Support Manager  
Gillian Ballinger, Finance Manager  
Heather Rae, Democratic Services Manager  
Michael Weeks, Democratic and Civic Officer  
Lynsey Nichols, Communication and Customer Services Manager  
Helen Bywater, Corporate Support Officer

**In attendance:** Councillor Nina Phillips

**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.

**48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Mary Norton and Ashley O'Neill.

**49. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTION**

There were no notifications of substitutions.

**50. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**51. MINUTES**

It was agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 were a correct record, they were proposed by Councillor Peter Hutton and seconded by Councillor John Scragg.

**RESOLVED that:**

The minutes were approved as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman at a later date.

**52. CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

i) The Chairman welcomed Matt Kirby, the Director of Community Services, to his first Strategy and Resources meeting.

**53. SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**i) CIVIC MATTERS SUB COMMITTEE**

Councillor Teresa Hutton presented the minutes. Councillors noted the minutes from the Extraordinary Civic Matters Sub Committee meeting held on 03 November 2020 and the recommendations therein and all matters were resolved.

**i) COMMUNITY DONATIONS SUB COMMITTEE**

Councillor Sandie Webb presented the minutes as Vice Chairman. Councillors noted the minutes from the Community Donations Sub Committee meeting held on 15 October 2020 and the recommendations therein and all matters were resolved.

**54. WORKING PARTY NOTES**

**i) FINANCE WORKING PARTY NOTES**

Councillor Jenny Budgell presented the notes. Councillors noted the Finance Working Party notes from the meetings held on 16 and 26 November 2020 and the recommendations therein and it was noted that all matters are ongoing.

**ii) DEVOLUTION WORKING PARTY NOTES**

Councillor Sandie Webb presented the notes. Councillors noted the Devolution Working Party notes from the meeting held on 22 October 2020 and the recommendations therein and all matters were resolved.

**iii) NEELD DEVELOPMENT WORKING PARTY NOTES**

Councillor Desna Allen presented the notes. Councillors noted the Neeld Development Working Party notes from the meeting held on 09 November 2020 and the recommendations therein and it was noted that all matters are ongoing.

## **55. FEES AND CHARGES**

The Director of Resources presented the proposed fees and charges to Councillors and noted they had been considered by the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee in November. The fees and charges are for services the Council charge for including using the sports facilities at Stanley Park or the cost of burials at the cemetery. It was recommended that there be no increase in fees and charges for 2021/22, with all in favour it was

### **RESOLVED that:**

Councillors approved the Amenities, Culture & Leisure Committee's recommendation that fees and charges for the Town Council's services and income areas do not increase for the next financial year 2021/22.

## **56. BUDGET 2021/22**

The Director of Resources presented a break-even budget for Income and Expenditure and a Capital/Earmarked Funds budget for 2021/22. The Finance Working Party had met four times to consider the budget, the assumptions made and worst-case scenarios.

The Director of Resources noted that South West Councils advised that there was still likely to be pay review negotiations for Councils next year and an increase had been factored into the budget. It was noted that when the Human Resources Committee considered the payroll budget, they approved a vacancy factor of 3%, however the Finance Working Party considered a 1% vacancy factor more achievable.

The Director of Resources outlined the proposal for the Strategy and Resources Committee to recommend to Full Council a break-even Income and Expenditure budget for 2021/22 which incorporates a precept of £3,406,852 and a Capital/Earmarked Fund Expenditure budget of £354,000.

Councillor Jenny Budgell thanked the Director of Resources and the Finance Team for their work, highlighted that the notes from Finance Working Party meetings had been circulated to all Councillors, and was in support of the proposed budget for 2021/22 as Chairman of the Finance Working Party.

Councillors requested that narrative be included regarding the difficulty of the current financial situation for local communities and that the Council will look at grant funding opportunities. The Director of Resources agreed to add appropriate wording into the report to Full Council in January.

### **RESOLVED that:**

Councillors noted the report and recommended that at its meeting on 13 January 2021 Full Council:

- i) adopts the proposed Income & Expenditure budget for 2021/22 and that a precept of £3,406,852 be raised for 2021/22;
- ii) adopts the proposed Capital/Ear Marked Funds budget of £354,000 for 2021/22.

## 57. COMMUNITY DONATIONS SUB COMMITTEE REVISED POLICY

The Corporate Support Officer presented the report on the proposed revisions to the Community Donations Sub Committee Policy. It was proposed that a line be added to the policy that for next year, pandemic related applications will be prioritised. It was also proposed that the Sub-Committee meet every three months rather than four months, this would be an increase from three to four meetings per year, the budget would remain the same.

Councillor Sandie Webb, on behalf of the Chairman of the Community Donations Sub Committee who was not present, proposed that if any funds are not used, they be rolled over to the next year. Councillors voted on the proposed amendment and with the majority against, the amendment did not pass.

Councillor Teresa Hutton requested that the Chairman of the Community Donations Sub Committee be included in the photographs taken with grant recipients and the Mayor.

Councillors voted all in favour of the original proposed amendments to the Community Donations Policy.

### RESOLVED that:

- i) Councillors agreed to adopt the updated Community Donations policy.
- ii) Councillors agreed to increase the number of meetings to four for the financial year 2021/22.
- iii) Photographs taken with grant recipients include the Mayor and the Chairman of the Community Donations Sub Committee.

## 58. INTERNAL AUDIT

The Director of Resources presented the internal audit report carried out by Auditing Solutions in line with the five-year plan of internal audit areas to review. The overall conclusion was that the Council continues to operate effective control systems, no matters arose for formal comment or recommendation.

The auditor suggested the Council consider diversifying its bank balances into other banks to reduce risk, the Finance Working Party could look at this.

Councillors requested the investment policy/strategy be reviewed and that investments be ethical; some benchmarking could be done with other councils and organisations to investigate this further.

### RESOLVED that:

Councillors noted the Internal Audit report.

**59. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION: AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS FOR MONTH 7**

The Finance Manager presented the report to Councillors and noted the BACS and Cheques audit of month 7 had taken place with Councillor James Adman and Councillor Clare Cape, who carried out the check virtually.

**RESOLVED that:**

Councillors noted the report.

**60. NEELD DEVELOPMENT PROGRESS REPORT**

The Chief Executive presented the report and updated Councillors on the process to date and noted that following a tender process in October 2019 Michael Edwards Consultants Ltd (MEA) were confirmed as the council's property consultant. MEA tendered and appointed Nash Partnership (NASH) in April 2020 as the architect to work on a potential Neeld Development project. MEA carried out a measured survey of the building and NASH prepared initial concept designs which were presented to the Neeld Development Working Party on 09 November. It was noted the cost of the work so far was just over £8000, funded from this year's consultancy budget.

At the Neeld Development Working Party an initial cost of £1.5 million, including fees was presented. It was noted officers were researching avenues for grant funding. The Chief Executive outlined the next steps need to be planned and sequential, a report would be taken to the Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee (ACL) on the use of the Neeld and how it fits with other Council facilities. A report would be taken to the Finance Working Party on the financing options, reverting to the Neeld Development Working Party for consideration before a further update report to the Strategy and Resources Committee (S&R). It was highlighted that it was important to include ACL regarding the building and function and S&R for finances.

Councillors requested that the Council's relationship with Borough Parade be reinforced as their activity has an impact on the Neeld. The Chief Executive confirmed that regular meetings take place with the Property Director of Borough Parade.

Councillors requested that public consultation be included in the next steps, the Chief Executive confirmed this update was about governance and public consultation will be considered.

**RESOLVED that:**

Councillors noted the report.

**61. ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION**

Councillors did not request any specific items for communication.

**62. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of this Committee will take place at 7pm on Wednesday 17 February 2021.

The meeting concluded at 7.48pm

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:

DRAFT