FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES **MINUTES**

ROYAL SUTTON COLDFIELD
TOWN COUNCIL

Finance and General Purpose Committee meeting
Wednesday 2nd November 2016
The Trinity Centre
6:30pm

Present:
Cllrs Pears, Hodivala, Jenkins, Okello, Parry, Pocock, S Ward and Wood.

In Attendance:
Cllrs Allan, Griffin, Horrocks and Passey as non-voting members.
Olive O'Sullivan – Acting Town Clerk , Mary Watkins Administrative Assistant, Natalia Gorman Administrative Assistant and Janet Eustace LGRC.

There were two members of the public and one member of the press present.

The Chairman welcomed those present and invited questions from the public. There were none.

17 Apologies for Absence
Cllr Pocock said that he would need to leave the meeting before 8pm to attend a ward meeting.

18 To appoint a Vice Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Resolved that Cllr Ward be appointed as Vice Chairman of the F&GP.

19 Declarations of Interest
Cllr Pears declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in items 25 (c) and (d).

20 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Noted that due to the confidential nature of the business of item 25 under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3, it was likely a motion would be proposed to exclude members of the public and press during discussion of this item.

21 Minutes of Last Meeting

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purpose Committee held on Tuesday 4th October 2016 and previously circulated be signed as a true record of the meeting.

22 Budget Proposals for 2016/17 and 2017/18
The Clerk outlined the process to be followed to draw up budgets and agree a precept for the following financial year. It was explained that money not spent in the current financial year would be moved to the general reserve and could be reallocated in 2017/18. The Council needed to set a realistic budget for 2017/18.

(a) Amenities, Leisure and Community Services Committee budget requirements.
Cllr Griffin introduced the budget of the Amenities, Leisure and Community Services Committee. The Committee discussed the budget in detail. It was agreed that:

- Expenditure on street furniture should be split £10,000 in each of the two years.
- That Cllr S Ward and the Clerk would work up a detailed project plan for cycles in the Town and that £75,000 budget should be included in 2017/18.
- That a separate budget head, called Park Enhancements should be included under 205 with a £50,000 budget in each of the two years.
- That the budget for WiFi be increased to £40,000 in each of the two years to cover provision of WiFi in all main local centres.
- That there be a budget of £40,000 in the current year for Services item 230.

The Committee discussed the provision of a registry service from the Town Council Offices and the Clerk reported on the preliminary discussions she had had with the Registrar. It was recognised that whilst this would be a valuable service to offer the residents there were a significant number of issues that would need to be overcome and it was agreed that a feasibility study was needed.

Resolved that subject to the amendments listed above, the budget be approved.

Cllr Pocock left the meeting during this item.

Cllr David Pears proposed, that in accordance with Standing Orders the meeting be extended for a further period of hour from 8:30pm.

Resolved That the meeting be extended until 9:30pm.

(b) Planning and Highways Committee budget requirements.
Cllr Allan introduced the budget of the Planning and Highways Committee. Councillors noted the importance of avoiding double taxation and agreed to establish a joint working party to look at the way Amey costed its activities. Councillors felt that the Town Council should be looking to fund work that was clearly a low priority with BCC, such as signage. Road safety and 20mph zones around schools were recognised as priorities as was the development of a Town Centre Plan.
Resolved to adopt the Planning and Highways budget as presented to the meeting.

(c) Finance and General Purposes Committee budget requirements.
Cllr Pears introduced the budget of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. He drew attention to the new item 155 (economic development). Cllr S Ward explained that the scheme was to support local entrepreneurs. It was agreed that £5,000 be moved into the current year's budget to allow pre-planning to begin. The committee noted the position regarding the ear marked reserves for future elections and possible by elections.

Resolved to adopt the F&GP budget as presented to the meeting subject to a minor amendment to item 155.

(d) Final figures to be presented to Full Council.

The Committee noted that the overall impact of the agreed changes to the budget resulted in net increases of £95,000 in 2016/7 and £90,000 in 2017/18. These increases could be accommodated within the budget but meant that the reserve at the end of 2017/18 was projected to be £471,000 rather than £600,000.

Resolved that the agreed budget for 2016/17 and 2017/18 should be recommended to Full Council and used as the basis for setting the precept for the following year.

23. Policies for Discussion

(i) Revised Communication Policy

It was noted that reference needed to be made to live streaming and that consultation with residents would be subject to a separate policy document.

(ii) Social Media Policy

It was suggested that this policy be amended to include the importance of ensuring that social media was not used to bring individual Councillors into disrepute.

Resolved that both polices should be referred to Full Council for approval.

24. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 7th December 2016.

25. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved that due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, members of the public and press be excluded from this item under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3.

(a) **Resolved** that additional office space should be rented and the Clerk was asked to arrange for the draft lease to be amended.

(b) **Resolved** that the Clerk should be authorised to purchase two safes to store the Civic Regalia. The Clerk's concerns regarding the safe keeping of the regalia were noted by Councillors who asked her to check the insurance implications.

(c) Resolved that the Council should use Cotterhill Hitchman as its Legal Advisor. Janet Eustace was asked to discuss the possibility of a fixed fee or retainer agreement.

(d) Resolved that the Council should appoint Ellis Whittam to provide employment advice on a five year fixed fee contract.

The meeting ended at 9:30pm