



Finance and General Purposes Meeting
Wednesday 7th December 2016
Sutton Coldfield Town Hall
7pm

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Olive O'Sullivan – Acting Town Clerk, Mary Watkins – Finance Assistant.

There were no members of the press or public present.

26 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

27 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

28 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Due to the confidential nature of the business of item number 36 under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3, it is likely a motion will be proposed to exclude members of the public and press during discussion of this item.

Resolved that due to the confidential nature of the business of item 36 under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3, members of the public be excluded during discussion of this item.

29 Minutes of Last Meeting

Cllr Parry asked for some clarification around item 22(b) on the previous minutes '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 all agreed that they should nominate members to progress this.

Resolved that Cllrs Wood, S Ward, L Parry and R Pocock would be members of the working party along with D Allan from the Planning and Highways Committee.

Cllr S Ward asked that the committee consider taking responsibility for the 'Town Centre Wi-Fi' and 'Cycles in Town' budgets as he was already working on proposals for these along with the Town Clerk as per item 22(a) on the previous minutes.

Resolved that the 'Cycles in Town' and 'Town Centre Wi-Fi' 2016/17 and 2017/18 budgets come under the responsibility of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.



Resolved that the above resolution is reflected in the minutes of the meeting and that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes committee held on Wednesday 2nd November 2016 (previously circulated) be signed as a true record of the meeting.

30 2017/18 Budgets

Cllr Parry suggested that the budget codes be added to the Six Pillars document and for the document to be circulated to F & G P Committee in order for the financial information extracted from the finance system to clearer match with the Six Pillars.

The Committee discussed the agreed process for progressing proposals, prior to making a decision on budget items. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would work with members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee to carry out exploratory work so that they could bring ideas to the Committee who will make recommendations to the Full Council.

Cllr Wood asked if the festive lights budget would be utilised this year. The Town Clerk advised that the lights for 2017 would be ordered over the next few months, any new commissions may include spend from the current year's allocation.

Cllr Pocock asked Committee to consider further allocation of the budget in February 2017 for any new projects that the Town Council may wish to fund adding that this would enable Committee to have a clearer picture of potential underspends that will go into the reserve fund.

Resolved to recommend budget to Full Council for approval with the amendment to the committee responsibilities as per resolution from item 29 ([adjusted budget attached](#)).

31 Performance Against Budget – Year to Date

Cllr Pears noted that the current budget of £50,000 for the Town Clerk was unlikely to be utilised this year and asked for some detail around the staffing budgets. Committee were informed that once the budgets were re-profiled, there would only be one budget for Salaries. Several Councillors voiced their frustration that the Acting Town Clerk has not yet received her new salary scale point agreed at the last Full Council.

Cllr Wood noted that Birmingham City Council had also not yet paid Councillor expenses. It was agreed that the Town Clerk should ask BCC to confirm that all payments would be current by the 21st December 2016.

Cllr Pocock noted that the RBS Omega financial report contained a column headed 'Committed Expenses' that only contained raised purchase order details and not full committed expenditure. It was suggested that during the reconfiguration of the accounts that it be requested this column was renamed 'PO's raised'.

Cllr Pears asked why the VAT had not yet been reclaimed. The Town Clerk confirmed that Local Authorities do not have to register to reclaim VAT in the same way as companies but that we are



currently awaiting some specialised advice from Birmingham City Council's VAT expert with regards to the correct way to reclaim the VAT paid whilst BCC were hosting our payments. It was agreed that VAT should be an agenda item for the next committee meeting.

Cllr S Ward provided an update on the fact-finding work that had been carried out in conjunction with the Town Clerk for Wi-Fi and Cycles. It was agreed that both would be agenda items on the next committee agenda.

Resolved to note the report.

32 Reprofile Budgets

Resolved to commission LGRC to reconfigure RBS Omega to the recommended coding structure.

33 Payment Charge Card

Cllr Pears raised some concerns on use of a Charge Card in the office. He asked how the VAT would be captured and how the use of the card would be controlled. The Town Clerk confirmed that the use of a Charge Card would be subject to the same controls currently used for the Petty Cash and that the named card holder and authoriser would be different members of staff to ensure separation of duties. Cllr Okello ask for some details around how the Charge Card would work. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Charge Card would be linked to our existing account and the balance cleared, automatically from our currently account, monthly.

Resolved that the Town Clerk use her delegated powers to apply for the Charge Card with an agreed limit of £500 per calendar month.

34 Precept

Committee considered the Town Clerk's report and agreed that there should be no increase in the Parish precept paid by local households in the new financial year. Cllr Pocock asked for some clarification around the statutory proportion reduction being set at 2.9%. The Town Clerk confirmed that there is a set formula for arriving at the number of Band D equivalent properties, which is applicable to all Councils. The number of Band D equivalent properties is used by Town/Parish Councils to calculate the Budget Requirement (Precept) figure the Billing Authority, i.e. Birmingham City Council, is requested to collect from households within the Parish. The Budget Requirement (Precept) is paid to the Town Council in two instalments, in April and October and the amount paid is the amount requested.

Resolved to recommend to Full Council that the precept for 2017/18 is set at £49.96 for a Band D property.

35 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 15th February - subject to Full Council approval.



36 Exclusion of Press and Public

The following agenda items, subject to agenda item number 28 will most likely be heard with the Public and Press excluded.

- Commercial in Confidence - Bank Account

Resolved that the Town Clerk will transfer £1m into an interest bearing account for a term of 3 months and will look at creating an Investment Strategy over the next few months.

- Commercial in Confidence - Internal Audit

Resolved that the Town Clerk use her Delegated Powers to appoint a suitable Internal Auditor with expertise in the Town Council sector.

Meeting finished at 8:25pm.

Appointed Committee Members

Cllr Hodivala, Jenkins, Okello, Parry, Pears, Pocock, S Ward and Wood.