

FINANCE, ASSET & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held in Ellesmere Town Hall on Tuesday 1st May, 2018 at 10.30am.

PRESENT: Councillors: Cllr R Hartley (Chair), P Goulbourne, Mrs E Peers and Mrs J Williams
Mandy Evans – Town Clerk
Phil Smith – Assistant Clerk

FAR-10/17 **To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence.**

RESOLVED - that apologies received from Cllrs G Elner – bereavement – and Mrs A Wignall – other engagement - be approved.

FAR-11/17 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda**

None.

FAR-12/17 **Grant Dispersations**

None received.

FAR-13/17 **Public Question Time**

No questions had been received and no members of the public were present.

FAR-14/17 **NALC Pay Scales**

The Town Clerk reported that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services had agreed new pay scales for local council staff for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Further information was in the NALC Bulletin which had been circulated to Members. The new pay scales for 2018/19 had been implemented from 1 April 2018, and the salary amounts and pro-rata rates for Town Council staff were circulated at the meeting.

The report was noted

FAR-15/17 **Partial VAT Exemption Calculation**

The Town Clerk reported that the Council was partially exempt from VAT up to a threshold of £7500 per annum based on the activity floor space of the Town Hall (including the shed & reception area). The Internal Auditor had advised that due to the VAT implications on the project for a new Town Hall entrance, there was a risk that the threshold would be exceeded. In order to mitigate against this a calculation was completed based on floor space used for non-business, VAT exempt business and mixed use. The calculation fell just below the £7500.00 threshold, due to this calculation the Council would not charge for use of the shed or kitchen by other individuals/organisations.

RESOLVED – To approve this calculation and to: RECOMMEND to Full Council that the Hire Charges for the Town Hall be amended to exclude charges for the shed for storage and exclusive use of the kitchen.

FAR-16/17 **Town Hall Entrance/Lobby Project**

At the last Town Council meeting, it had been reported that the amount allocated to the Town Hall Entrance/Lobby project from Shropshire Council's Section 106 Public Realm Fund was £20,000, which was £10k less than had been expected. It had been agreed that this Committee give further consideration to the funding of the Project and the implications of making up the shortfall.

The Town Clerk reported that, while the Project had not yet gone out to tender, the project managers had advised that a figure of around £40k should be budgeted for. In addition, there was a £5k fee for the employment of Shropshire Premises Services as the project managers. It was therefore proposed that the Council take out a loan of £25k from the Public Works Loan Board, repayable over 25 years.

During the ensuing discussion, questions were asked in relation to the cost of such a loan, what other loans were outstanding, and whether reserves could be used to fund the Project. The Town Clerk stated that she did not have exact figures on the cost of a loan but provided indicative figures for another loan taken out a few years ago. Two existing loans would be paid off within the next 18 months, which would leave three outstanding loans. In terms of the use of reserves, it was considered that it would not be prudent to take such a large sum from reserves.

RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND to Full Council that in principle a loan of £25k over a 25 year term for the part-funding of the new Town Hall Entrance be approved, subject to more detailed figures being provided on the interest charges payable on the loan.

AGREED – that the Town Clerk prepare an end of year report for all outstanding loans (including any relating to the former Joint Burial Committee).

FAR-17/17 **Ellesmere Town Hall Repairs**

The Town Clerk reported on three quotes that had been received for works to replace the external door/frame to the bar, the fire exit door from the Small Hall, and the side door to the storage shed.

RESOLVED – that the quote from D M Holt in the sum of £1924.00 (including labour to paint the doors) be approved.

FAR-18/17 **Water Chlorination – Ellesmere Town Hall and Cross Street Toilets**

The Town Clerk reported on three quotes that had been received for works that had been identified at the Town Hall and Cross Street Toilets following a legionella risk assessment.

Confirmation has been received from the Company who completed the Risk Assessment to say that once the works were done, there would no longer be a need for the monthly water chlorination checks that the Council currently paid for.

RESOLVED - that the quotes from Princes LHS Ltd in the sums of £195 (+VAT) for the Town Hall and £1450 (+VAT) for Cross Street Toilets be approved.

FAR-19/17 **Shropshire Council Consultation – Environmental Maintenance Grant**

Shropshire Council was running a six week consultation on the future design of its Environmental Maintenance Grant (EMG) programme. The recipients of these grants were overwhelmingly rural parish councils and a small number of town councils. The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had received a small sum of money from the EMG programme last year. The deadline for responses was 21 May 2018.

RESOLVED – that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, to respond to the consultation.

FAR-20/17 **West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner – Town & Parish Council Survey**

The West Mercia PCC was conducting a survey of town and parish councils seeking views on local policing provision, contact and engagement, and any crime and anti-social behaviour issues that were causing concern.

The Committee went through the survey and agreed a response to the questions. Some of the responses regarding local provision reflected the concerns of the Town Council at the current situation where no cover had been provided for a PCSO who was on maternity leave.

FAR-21/17 **NALC Revised Standing Orders**

The Town Clerk reported that the model Standing Orders prepared by NALC for use by town and parish councils had been updated/revised, and had been circulated to Members. The changes were highlighted in red. In relation to Standing Order 3, a decision needed to be made on a maximum time limit for a Town Council meeting.

RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND to Full Council that the Revised Standing Orders, including a clause that a meeting shall not exceed 2.5 hours, be approved.

FAR-22/17 **Shropshire County Pension Fund**

At the last Town Council meeting, Members had asked for more information about the deficit lump sum payment that the Council was being asked to pay for 2018/19, and whether employees were also being asked to contribute towards the deficit – and the matter had been deferred to this Committee.

The Town Clerk read out a response from the County Pension Fund. It was noted that information given at the Town Council meeting about the payment for 2017/18 was incorrect, and that the deficit payment had been £1400 for that year. This meant that there was a £100 increase for 2018/19.

RESOLVED - that the annual deficit lump sum payment of £1500 for 2018/19 be made to the Shropshire County Pension Fund.

The meeting closed at 12.10pm

Chair: 

Date: 6 - 8 - 18
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