

MINUTES

At a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee on MS TEAMS on Tuesday 5th January 2021

Present: Councillors: Bates, Brice (Vice-Chair), Bridges, Cavill, Fuller, Halik, Hoar, King (Substitute for Drewett), Oldrieve (Substitute for Bridges), Palmen (Chair) & Whiffen.

In attendance: Cllr Kirk, Cllr Piazza, Wiltshire Cllr Trigg.

Officers: Mr L Allan (Town Clerk/RFO), Mrs A Quick (Minutes), Mrs J Weimar (Head of Resources & Venues).

Public: 3

Press: 3

3204 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED to approve apologies from Cllr Bridges (substituted by Cllr Oldrieve).

3205 MINUTES

- a. **RESOLVED to approve** as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2020. Mr Mitchell requested an amendment to the minutes to change reference to Castle Place, not Tesco in 3194.
- b. **There were no questions.**
- c. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Civic Board meeting held on 10th November 2020.
- d. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Risk & Audit Panel held on 10th November 2020.

3206 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest not already included on the Register.

3207 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Happy New Year and thanks were expressed to the Officers, particularly those picking up prescriptions and assisting with shielding during the continuing Covid pandemic.

3208 OPEN FORUM

The committee considered questions from the public.

Mr Mitchell commented on the large amount of rubbish on the street. Litter pickers from Wiltshire Council require greater direction to fulfil their role. Cllr Palmen responded that this will be highlighted to Neighbourhood Services and Wiltshire Council. Cllr King agrees that we should not be paying for this service or should have some control over this role. It was requested whether TTC could supply a member of staff to be secretary for half a day per week for the Armed Forces Weekend to support the committee. It was requested the link for TTC Meetings is made freely available without notice. Cllr Piazza stated Salisbury have this option for joining meetings and would be good for TTC.

3209 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

Cllr Palmen ran through the P&R Report and in particular.

2.1.2 Annual Accounts - For the 1st time we have a qualification in our accounts which is a technical matter. We did not account for income which was received in 2019/20 but not spent in 2019/20. The external auditors have said we should have accounted for it in the year in which it was received. Our accountants have provided an explanation.

Initial

2.1.6 Financial Implications of Coronavirus Emergency – Cllr Kirk believes that double taxation has been implemented for services which have already received a contribution from the precept. Town Clerk stated that this is furlough receipts from the government which would have been commercial income and therefore the residents have not been charged twice. Cllr Kirk stated that staff at the Civic Centre could be made redundant instead of using furlough. Town Clerk suggests that Cllr Kirk makes a complaint to the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is not satisfied with the fact that the council is able to claim furlough. Cllr Palmen highlighted that Wiltshire Council have furloughed a significant number of their staff too.

3.1.2 Neighbourhoods - Cllr King asked if the staff allocated to helping with shielding services will affect the cleaning of the town and other NS services. Town Clerk replied that in the previous lockdown it was advised that NS should cease but this is not the case this time so volunteers will be used and this should not impact on Neighbourhood Services.

4.2.2 Sports Pitch Project - Doric Park – Approval from Rugby Club, now waiting for some info on drainage strategy and planning decision can then be made. Cllr Kirk asked if this project should be postponed during the pandemic. He suggests the business plan needs to be looked at again due to Coronavirus. Cllr Palmen suggest further discussion on this at full council in March.

5.2 Weavers Market – Meeting tomorrow to discuss whether they will go forward, group is keen to resume this from May.

5.4 Elections - There are discussions about the election being moved back a few months. Town Clerk highlighted the new town boundaries will be used for the election. The list of streets in each ward are available from the website.

6. Town Development – A planning application has been submitted for villas fronting Stallard St. McDonogh Court permission has increased to 18 houses. Castle St land is up for sale. Various applications are in process for Manvers House. Cllr Kirk asked about section 106 and CIL; is there any way of challenging how they spend that money at Elizabeth Way? Town Clerk doesn't think there is a way of challenging this and doesn't think it has ever been tested in court. Town Clerk summarised the development plans across town as detailed in the P&R Report.

6.4 Neighbourhood Plans – Melksham Neighbourhood Plan is currently available for consultation.

8.1.2 CATG – Town Clerk thanked those who have submitted recommendations for the agenda to go forward to committee.

8.4 Wiltshire Police - Police & Crime Commissioner has released his report requesting an extra £15 per year on Band D Council Tax to increase the number of police officers.

3210 EVENTS 2021/2022

The committee RESOLVED to note the following events:

Heritage Event – £3,000 has been included from the budget towards a Heritage event in 2021/22 which could incorporate elements of the Veterans Weekend and also a contribution from the Museum. If this does not go ahead in 2021 the funds could be used to contribute towards a larger event in 2022.

Active Festival – Cancelled for July 2021 due to organisation taking place 9 months in advance. Cllr Whiffen asked if a small committee could be formed to take over the Armed Forces group. Mr Mitchell offered his support and Cllr Fuller suggested it would be useful to provide a secretarial role to assist. Cllr Cavill suggested that nobody came forward as the event is significant role and responsibility. Cllr Whiffen suggested a request for a small committee should be put on the TTC website at the appropriate time. Cllr Piazza asked about the £3,000 allocated to the event which is a downgrade from the previous £7,000. We should increase this if possible as it is an important event for the town. Cllr Palmen suggest Cllr Piazza put this forward as an amendment to the budget. Cllr Hoar suggested that we could roll over the £3,000 to next year so we will then have a larger budget.

3211 ENERGY FROM WASTE INCINERATOR (Report Item 1.1)

Cllr Palmen suggests we can respond with a simple statement that we are not in favour of this.

RESOLVED: Trowbridge Town Council is concerned that this Incinerator will have an adverse effect on the air quality in Trowbridge due to both direct pollution, generated by the incinerator's operation and pollution created by the vehicles coming through Trowbridge to deliver waste to the incinerator.

3212 GRANTS (Report Item 2.1.1)

The committee **CONSIDERED** grant applications for 2020/2021 and

RESOLVED:

Splitz Support Service	£600.00
Group Five	£900.00
Trowbridge Ladies Rugby	£400.00
Trowbridge & District Youth Band	£500.00
Trowbridge Street Pastors	£500.00
Wiltshire Sight	£750.00
MONDAY WEDNESDAY CLUB	£1,000.00
FAMILIES OUT LOUD	£500.00
Friends of Biss Meadows Country Park (FoBM)	£929.55
Wessex MS Therapy Centre	£420.45
Help Counselling	£1,000.00
Trowbridge Environmental Community	£1,000.00
Carer Support Wiltshire	£1,000.00

Cllr Kirk suggested that going forward we refer Grant requests to Area Board at an early stage. Cllr Brice advised that Cllrs should add their opinions to the grant application before the meeting.

RESOLVED that Trowbridge Town Council will refer appropriate applicants to the Area Board.

3213 WILTSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW (Report Item 6.3.2)

Cllr Palmen proposed we put forward our questions to Wiltshire Council and the Committee will consider its final submission to the consultation at the meeting in March.

Cllr Fuller advised that the employment land on West Ashton Road was always rejected. Should we ask the planners to swap the allocation area to areas closer to Biss Woods?

RESOLVED:

1. Can Wiltshire Council confirm that this review has accepted that the Core Strategy Settlement Strategy in respect of Trowbridge as a Principal Settlement is now no longer tenable and that in fact the proposal is not 'at Trowbridge' in the same sense as Wiltshire Council argued that allocations in the WHSAP were 'at Trowbridge' and that the figures for the Trowbridge HMA should be presented to indicate that the Trowbridge Settlement Residual to Identify housing number should be shown against the 'Rest of HMA' or against a separate allocation of 'Large Villages close to Trowbridge' and not as Trowbridge (Settlement)?
2. Can Wiltshire Council explain how it can make a significant allocation on the boundary of the defined Large Village Settlement of Hilperton and claim that it is connected to the 'Trowbridge Settlement' when the 'Trowbridge Settlement' lies on the far side of Hilperton?
3. Can Wiltshire Council explain how it can claim that they have identified that; 'the most sustainable options for accommodating growth lie to the north and east of the town' when sites in the Greenbelt have not been subject to a sustainability appraisal and are probably significantly more sustainable than the chosen sites?

4. **Can Wiltshire Council explain how it can justify ignoring sites around Southwick and North Bradley when such sites are just as sustainable as the chosen sites and have the potential to deliver much better traffic infrastructure improvements, positively impacting on a wider area?**
5. **Can Wiltshire Council confirm that by including a semi-‘Growth at Westbury’ option in the Trowbridge HMA and by allocating a greater level of growth at Melksham than at Trowbridge, it is confirming that the Settlement Strategy is failing and that if these two towns were classified as Principal Settlements the allocations from Trowbridge could be reallocated to them alongside the proposed Melksham Outer Bypass and an improvement to the route between Yarnbrook and the A36 to relieve traffic at Westbury?**
6. **Can Wiltshire Council confirm if it has seriously considered an alternative strategy which includes one or more new/expanded settlements in combination with existing, proposed or potential new railway stations, such as Pewsey, Hullavington and Devizes/Lydeaway?**
7. **Will Wiltshire Council be providing each designated neighbourhood area a housing requirement in accordance with NPPF paragraph 65 or will they be providing an indicative figure in accordance with paragraph 66 and explaining why it is not possible to comply with paragraph 65?**
8. **Will Wiltshire Council provide either the housing requirement or the indicative figure for each of the following:**
 - **Trowbridge**
 - **Hilperton**
 - **West Ashton**
 - **North Bradley**
 - **Southwick**
 - **Staverton?**
9. **Can Wiltshire Council confirm the proposed allocation of the triangle of land between Leap Gate and West Ashton Road which has previously been allocated for employment but is also subject to a mixed use application which has not been determined, would it be appropriate to approve this application and allocate additional land at Ashton Park for employment uses to reduce pressure on bat habitat and recreational impact on bat foraging?**

3214 BUDGET 2021/2022 (Report Item 2.1.5 and APPENDIX B)

The committee considered the draft budget for 2021/2022.

Cllr Palmen stated we are making savings from Active Trowbridge (natural wastage) and putting more into supporting the Civic due to Covid 19. Cllr Kirk is concerned that we haven't made provision for taking on services from Wiltshire Council. Cllr Hoar responded that there is potential to save NHS large amounts by providing Active Trowbridge and the Civic Centre is crucial to the town and that Cllr Kirk is not striving for this to succeed after the pandemic. Cllr Fuller highlights we are towards the bottom of the Council Tax table of Wiltshire Towns due to the history of TTC. This year Active Trowbridge has taken £10,740 income, against a budget of £347,000. We are not making contribution this year towards services to be taken on from Wiltshire Council so potentially there might be a rise to cover this in subsequent years. Cllr Whiffen is concerned that we are making no contribution to reserves and recognises that the precept will need to go up in the future. Town Clerk states that we have set £40,000 for services to be taken on from WC in the current year and in future years we would need to contribute to these services by £64,000 for 22/23, £296,000 for 23/24 and £414,300 for 24/25. Those figures result in an increase of £10 per year for a Band D Council Tax. There is a contribution of £18,900 going into general reserves in 2021/22 which will increase to £75,500 for 2 years then £36,300 the following year. Cllr Piazza stated that the Conservative Group hasn't put forward an alternative budget.

Trowbridge Town Council

Policy & Resources Committee 5th January 2021

RESOLVED: The Committee approved the draft budget for **RECOMMENDATION** to the Full Council on 19th January.

That in order to meet; the budget expenditure recommended by the committees; the requirement to fund an increase in General Reserves and; in anticipation of additional services being transferred from Wiltshire Council over the next four years, with an expectation from the community that the town council will take full responsibility for those additional services and deliver a quality of service better than that experienced in recent years (whilst they have been the responsibility of Wiltshire Council), the Council Tax Charge for Trowbridge Town Council for 2021/22 should be increased by an amount greater than CPI inflation.

- a. That the Council approves the department Budgets for 2021/22 (incl. loan finance) as detailed on the budget spreadsheets, totalling £1,944,406
- b. That the Council approves that the contribution to General Reserves for 2021/22 be £18,900
- c. That the Council approves that a contribution to Earmarked Reserves for transfers from Wiltshire Council for 2021/22 be £0
- d. That the Council therefore approves a total budget requirement 2020/21 of £1,963,306
And that this is funded in part through estimated income for 2022/22 from Community Infrastructure Levy of (£22,000)
Leaving a net precept requirement for 2021/22 of 1,941,306
Which results in an increase of £2.48 on the
Trowbridge Town Council 'Band D' Council Tax Charge, to £167.46
Which is less than £3.22 per week.

Against: Cllr Halik
Abstain: Cllr Whiffen

3215 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED to approve the payments and receipts since the last meeting:

	Payments	Receipts
October	318,369.03	192,226.73
November	174,335.92	45,687.24

3216 MEDIA RELEASES

- Town Clerk will provide detailed information on the budget recommendation.
- TTC will provide anything necessary for this 2nd lockdown, including the helpline number.
- Raising questions on the local plan review.
- Information on the grants review.
- Objection to the waste incinerator.
- Wellbeing Hub and list of Mental Health Charities.

3217 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 2nd March 2021 on Microsoft MS TEAMS.

The Meeting closed at 21.25

Signature.....Dated.....

Initial