

MINUTES

At a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held in The Council Chamber at The Civic, Trowbridge, on Tuesday 11th January 2022 at 19.00hrs.

Present: Councillors: Bates, Bridges, Bryant, Cave, Cavill, Cooper (substitute for Cllr Palmen), Hoar, Palmen (on TEAMS), Piazza & Trigg.

Officers: Mr L Allan (Town Clerk/RFO), Mrs A Quick (Minutes).

Other Councillors in attendance: Cllr Jacobs, Cllr Edward Kirk, Cllr Palmen (ONLINE).

Public: Mr Lomas, Wiltshire Councillor E Clark (ONLINE).

Press: M McLaughlin (ONLINE).

3299 **APOLOGIES**

RESOLVED to approve apologies from Cllr Palmen (Due to isolation attended on TEAMS, substituted in person by Cllr Cooper).

3300 **MINUTES**

- a. **RESOLVED to approve** as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2021.
- b. **Cllr Trigg highlighted the following actions are outstanding;**
 - *Bandstand safety statement required from **Facilities Manager**.*
 - *A meeting was held with GPs.*
- c. **RESOLVED to note** the Minutes of the Civic Board meeting held on 23rd November 2021.
- d. **RESOLVED to note** the Minutes of the Risk & Audit Panel held on 23rd November 2021.

3301 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

3302 **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chair gave birthday congratulations to Cllr Bates.

3303 **OPEN FORUM**

Mr Lomas, presented the following statement;

"After all my representations over the last 6 months, or so, about the increasing ASB and crime problems in Trowbridge, I thought it only correct that I come here this evening to thank the Town Council for setting up the ASB and Crime Working Group. I am pleased that at last the serious problem has been realized and that the issue is now on the agenda. There is no doubt the problem is real. Indeed, sadly even over the recent season of goodwill there has been more serious crime, vandalism and ASB in the town centre. I have to say, I was a little dismayed at how dismissive Trowbridge Police were, and how contradictory they were of their own report at the last Full Council meeting. However, this is not about knocking the police, who I hope are doing their best they can in trying conditions. But with the working group I am sincerely hoping that all sides can come together and try and get to the root cause of the problems, eg:

Why is Trowbridge a hot spot for so much ASB and crime?

What is making these individuals or groups so angry and destructive?

Why don't they know how to act properly in society?

I'm hoping relevant experts will be involved and solutions worked through. This town and the majority of residents definitely deserve more from the authorities.

I'm not able to stay for the whole meeting tonight but look forward to hearing if there is any expansion on what is written at 1.2 of the Town Clerk's report at agenda item 7."

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3304 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Clarification was requested for dates of meetings; P&R today with Full Council next week giving little time to pose questions. Town Clerk responded that in January P&R has been held a week later due to New Year Bank Holiday therefore allowing time for papers to be compiled and issued.

3305 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

Cllr Bryant ran through the P&R Report and in particular;

2.1.11 SDAT – Cllr Edward Kirk asked for an update on service delegation. TC clarified we are in discussion with WC. There is a meeting later this week, TC will take the position that we do not wish to take on The Down Cemetery.

3.3.1 Longfield Community Centre –

ACTION - Town Clerk to find out details on Maranatha building works proposal & feedback.

Doric Park – TC clarified that nothing in the budget has been ‘pushed through’. Any decision the committee makes on the budget this evening does not approve changes to the Doric Park project but allows the committee to understand the background.

Cllr Cave asked whether the amount has already been added into the budget in case it is passed at this meeting? TC advised that by approving the budget we are not committing to borrow £3.2 million as this would need to be approved at Full Council, but are demonstrating that this does not have an impact on the budget bottom line and the precept requirement.

Cllr Edward Kirk stated that the TTC Strategy covers 4 years but we commit to debts over 40+ years. We should have an objective look at this by a different RFO outside the council to give a responsible view. TC stated he has not been advised by the council to instruct an independent RFO. Cllr Bryant advised that councils have to fund over a period of time to prevent large precepts at the beginning of projects.

Mr Lomas left the meeting at 19.28.

Cllr Piazza stated that other councils will not be able to fund such projects as they do not have sufficient population. Cllr Bryant said that as a larger town we are in a privileged position to be able to do such projects. Cllr Hoar asked if the fixed term loan will decrease over time? WC and Government are not going to assist with investment in Trowbridge and it is unfortunate that the comments are all negative. TC advised the current interest rate is typically 2.34% depending on the term (less than inflation).

Cllr Bryant stated no decision has been made so no money has been spent yet. TC confirmed that only Section 106 money spent so far is approx. £300k.

Edward Kirk would only sign up if the loan period was shorter like a business forecast with a similar loan term e.g. 10 years or the lifetime of the asset.

Cllr Jacobs suggested that the report demonstrates that costs are continuing to be looked at and we need to look forward to the best future for Trowbridge.

Cllr Cave asked whether it's possible to have details without all the building costs etc. TC stated we will be required to have a building with a certain spec. to receive the £488k from the Football Foundation and that we have enhanced this in order to provide for Wiltshire College and make the project more financially viable.

Cllr Hoar advised that it is not a business loan, it is an investment in the town. Would others cut costs or slash services?

4.1.4 Elm Grove – To be decided at Strategic Planning committee tomorrow. (NB approved).

5.2 Civic Dinner - Cllr Bates advised the emails went out today and it will be widely promoted therefore will be delighted if you can attend. Cllrs discussed the requirement to pay for tickets and Cllr Bryant advised it will be raising money for two worthy charities.

6.1 FHSF – Town Clerk advised contingency arrangements are being made for alternative dates in February awaiting a decision by WC. Town Clerk had a meeting with the Director of Highways and Transport last week.

Initial

6.2 Bradford Road - New application for the care home has been received this week and will go to the next TD meeting. Details are on the website.

8.1.3 Public Transport, Bus Services – Cllr Trigg advised that the DI service will not be going beyond Warminster to Salisbury.

3306 TOWN PARK POND

The Committee considered the RECOMMENDATION and it was;

RESOLVED: That subject to the end of year financial situation the Town Council commits funding of up to £20,000 towards the Town Park Pond improvement project.

3307 BUDGET

The committee considered the Town Clerk's Report (Section 2.1 Budget) and RECOMMENDATION.

Cllr Kirk asked for more details on the £100k for the museum. TC will provide Cllr Kirk with a full response and will forward this to all other Cllrs. This does not impact the budget. Town Clerk advised the museum was closed during Covid and refurbishment. We managed to get some of the costs down as running costs have been lower than they normally would. We now have a museum twice the size and we are back to normal with running of the museum. It wasn't included in the budget as we expected to be receiving the lottery funding.

Cllr Hill asked for clarity regarding the 20% precept increase? Town Clerk advised this is not due to Doric Park. It has been stated by the leader that the council has not been 'forced' to take on services Wiltshire Council but has no other option to see improvements and will be able to do a better job than WC.

Edward Kirk left the meeting at 20.07.

Cllr Piazza will not support this budget. He suggested TTC are making a choice taking on these services. Why can't we fight this like other parishes? A clear breakdown where the money is going as a pie chart would be very useful. Last year's budget with a 1.5% increase was an election budget. Prior to that it was higher and now after an election it is higher again. It would be preferable to increase a small amount regularly. Cllr Bryant advised we don't know when projects will go ahead (eg. Asset transfer) so it is not to do with election year. The Leader has been open that the precept will be increased, it has not been hidden. We have the opportunity to improve the town. It is believed that WC won't drop its precept following asset transfer but the town will deteriorate if we do not take on these assets.

Cllr Bridges left the meetings at 20.18, returned at 20.21.

Cllr Cooper suggested that any public statement needs to be clear that this is an increase by TTC only, not the Council Tax as a whole. At the NS meeting we all agreed that we would take the additional services next year. It would be WC charging double taxation, not TTC.

Cllr Jacobs highlighted that the services won't improve without service delegation, allowing TTC to be responsible for the town. It is a relatively small, complex budget providing a lot of facilities. The council need to find a way to support residents of Castle Mead.

Cllr Trigg advised the most important issues for residents are grass cutting and litter picking. The area needs to be cared for so it is a difficult balance. As a council we should be continuing to look at how budgets are put together with challenges and suggestions.

Cllr Hoar highlighted that asset transfer will allow us to implement environmental factors and will improve the whole town encouraging more investment.

Cllr Trigg left at 20.38, returned at 20.41.

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RESOLVED: That in order to meet; the budget expenditure requested by the committees; the adopted Council Strategy 2021-2025; the requirement to fund an increase in General Reserves over the medium term and in anticipation of additional services being transferred from Wiltshire Council, 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 Committee approves the following **RECOMMENDATION** to Council;

That the Council approves the department Budgets for ongoing activities as detailed on the budget spreadsheets, totalling	£1,558,132
That the council approves the WC transfer activities Budgets as detailed on the budget spreadsheets, totalling	£322,313
That the council approves the loan finance Budgets as detailed on the budget spreadsheets, totalling	£442,918
That the Council approves a contribution to General Reserves of	£46,480
That the Council therefore approves a total budget requirement of	£2,369,843
That this is funded in part through estimated income from Community Infrastructure Levy of	(£20,000)
Resulting in a net precept requirement of	£2,349,843

Which results in an increase of £5.20 or 3.1% for ongoing activities and an additional increase of £27.45 or 16.4% for WC transfer activities, giving a **TOTAL INCREASE** of £32.65 or 19.5% on the Trowbridge Town Council 'Band D' Council Tax Charge, to £200.10 Which is less than £3.85 per week.

Recorded vote: Against – Cllrs Piazza and Cave. All others voted in favour.

3308 CATG (REPORT ITEM 8.1.1)

The committee considered the RECOMMENDATION and it was:

RESOLVED: That the above allocation from the 2021/22 budget of £1077.11 is approved and that an allocation in advance from the 2022/23 budget of £617.39 is approved, both as an additional contribution for improvements to the Newtown Pedestrian Crossing.

3309 POLICIES

The committee considered the following Policies and Procedures and it was:

RESOLVED: To approve the Freedom of Information Policy

RESOLVED: To approve the Training & Development Policy

RESOLVED: To approve the Pensions Discretions Policy

RESOLVED: To approve the Casual Recruitment Procedure

3310 MOTIONS

None.

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3311 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The committee considered for approval payments and receipts made since the last meeting of the Council recorded on the Cash Receipts and Payments Records by the Finance Officer and to confirm the action of Councillors Blackmore and Bridges in signing the Cash Payments and Receipts Records.

	<u>Payments</u>	<u>Receipts</u>
October	220,432.14	60,507.44
November	224,050.23	100,617.70

RESOLVED: That the committee approves the payments and receipts for October and November.

3312 MEDIA RELEASES

RESOLVED to approve:

- Town Park Pond
- Budget going to Full Council for Approval
- CATG

3313 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 1st March 2022.

3314 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That; in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, it would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted; and therefore the meeting should resolve that the public and press be temporarily excluded and be instructed to withdraw.

3315 CIVIC AWARD

The Committee RESOLVED:

To make a RECOMMENDATION to Full Council regarding nominations for the annual Civic Award to be presented at the Civic Dinner.

Meeting closed at 20.55 hrs.

Initial