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**Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Policy, Resources & Finance Committee 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022 at 7.00pm held by video-conference using Zoom meeting software; and in the Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil BA20 1PQ.**

**Present (in person):** Cllrs G Oakes (Chair); T Casey; N Gage; K Gill; E Hopkins; A Kendall; E Potts-Jones; R Spinner and R Stickland.

**Present (virtually):** Cllr J Snell.

**In Attendance (in person):** A Card (Town Clerk); and H Ferdinand (Deputy Town Clerk).

**In Attendance (virtually):** Cllrs A Richards (Wyndham Hill Ward) and H Stonier (Westlands Ward) and Lucy Jones (Assistant Town Clerk).

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

## **7.00 pm - Public Comment**

The member of the public made a comment about the Comments Policy. He stated that he welcomed the proposed policy as public attendance and participation and the Council's openness to public scrutiny is the mark of a democratic climate. He stated that if there was an opportunity to speak on each agenda item it would encourage greater public participation. He did not agree with the proposal that speakers who are invited to give a presentation should not receive questions, he thought that they should be expected to receive questions. He suggested that the policy be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it was fit for purpose.

### **11/035 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO CONSIDER THE REASONS GIVEN**

Apologies were received from Cllrs S Lowery (personal); J Snell (family commitments but attended virtually) and A Soughton (unwell).

**RESOLVED:** to accept the apologies with the reasons given.

### **11/036 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest at this time.

**11/037**      **MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meetings held on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022 be signed as a correct record.

**11/038**      **PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding a suggested Public Comment Policy.

Discussions were held on collecting personal details of those wishing to speak, the Town Clerk mentioned that GDPR would have to be considered. It was suggested that clarification be sought regarding this.

One Councillor spoke that whilst it was positive that the proposal put forward did not include that questions be submitted 72 hours in advance of the meeting, he would be unable to support something that would reduce public engagement. He stated that the Town Council should be encouraging members of the community to engage with the Council and to question any representative.

Another Councillor stated that guests that attend are there to give a presentation to the Councillors and as Councillors they represent the public. He felt that it would not be appropriate to open up all agenda items for the public to comment.

It was commented that it was a good idea that questions be submitted 72 hours before meetings so that officers had time to research the answer.

The Chair stated that it was important that if a speaker came that they were aware that they were going to be asked questions, possibly about something that they were not there to talk about.

**7:25pm** – *Two members of the public joined the meeting.*

A question was raised as to why a policy was even being considered. The Town Clerk said that she felt it was really useful to have a public comments policy as it is useful for the public to understand the rules of engagement as well as being useful for the Clerk and the Chair of the meetings as a framework to follow. There is currently no policy and as such what is deemed appropriate could be different for all those involved.

Standing orders were suspended to give the two members of the public to speak. One member of the public spoke regarding this agenda item. Standing orders were then reinstated.

The revised suggested wording for paragraph 2: “Any speaker who is invited to give an update on their organisation or a project who attends a meeting of the Council and Committee may be subject to questions from the public. On invitation, the speaker will be notified that there may be questions from both Councillors and members of the public. The agenda will reflect whether or not the speaker would welcome questions from the public.”

**RESOLVED:** (1) approve the Public Comment Policy as suggested within the agenda subject to replacing the second paragraph with the above-mentioned wording; and (2) that clarification be sought regarding GDPR for the collation of personal details for those wanting to speak.

*(voting: unanimous)*

**7:25pm** – Two members of the public left the meeting and did not return.

**11/039      BALANCE SHEET**

Members considered the Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

**11/040      BANK RECONCILIATION**

Members considered the formal bank reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the formal bank reconciliation as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022.

**11/041      FINANCIAL STATEMENT – JUNE 2022 / JULY 2022**

Members considered the financial statement for the months of June 2022 and July 2022.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the financial statement for the months of June 2022 and July 2022.

**11/042      2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 (MONTH 1 – 6)**

Members considered the Revenue Budget Monitoring report for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (Month 1 – 6). The report provided Members with the current projection of the expected expenditure and income against the Council approved budget for the financial year 2022/23 and explained significant variances against budget. Current projections highlighted an anticipated underspend of £39,482 (3.3%).

A question was raised regarding the revenue generated for Milford Hall, the Town Clerk explained that the Family Time Team had not taken up residency of the sub-hall and meeting room until August 2022 but now the Town Council should see the benefits of revenue generation on future reports.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report.

**11/043      CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE**

Members considered the Civility and Respect Pledge.

**RESOLVED:** to recommend the Civility and Respect Pledge to Town Council to be adopted.

**11/044      LCNS CONSULTATION**

Members considered the LCNS Consultation in order to formulate a response on behalf of the Council. The closing date of the consultation is on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

The Town Clerk explained that the 3 proposals had been scientifically determined by a method called 'hexing data analysis'. Proposal A was balanced in terms of geography, Proposal B was balanced more in terms of population and Proposal C in terms of Unitary Electoral Divisions. The Committee looked at depth at the boundaries of each proposal. Discussions were held that although Proposal B was the best fit for Yeovil Town it should also include villages to the Northeast of Yeovil – namely Yeovilton, Ilchester and Queen Camel

**RESOLVED:** (1) that the preferred proposal was Proposal B to include villages to the Northeast of Yeovil (Yeovilton, Ilchester and Queen Camel); and (2) that the Town Clerk complete the other questions of the consultation on behalf of the Council.

#### **11/045 OPTION TO OPT OUT OF THE SAA CENTRAL EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENT ARRANGEMENTS**

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding the option to opt out of the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments. The Town Clerk highlighted that there would be no benefits to opt out of the current arrangement.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; (2) to continue as part of the SAA sector led auditor appointment regime; and (3) to note that no further action is required, and that Yeovil Town Council will remain part of the central scheme.

#### **11/046 FUTURE EVENTS**

Members considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk (SF) regarding the recommendation from the Promotions and Activities Committee at its recent meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 that a two day "Yeovil Celebrates..." event takes place on the weekend of 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May 2023 with an anticipated budget requirement of £70,000.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to note the report; (2) that funding of £70,000 be agreed so that planning can commence; and (3) that £70,000 be included in the budget for 2023/24.

*(voting: unanimous)*

#### **11/047 FORWARD PLAN**

To approve the forward plan as detailed within the agenda.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the forward plan.

#### **Public Comment**

The Member of the press made a comment regarding the presentation at Town Council from the Yeovil Refresh Manager.

**8:40 pm** – *The remaining member of the public and the member of the press left the meeting and did not return.*

#### **11/048 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity of agenda items 11/048 – 11/050 would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s3

#### **11/049 RECOMMENDATION FROM BUILDINGS AND CIVIC MATTERS - TOWN HOUSE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OPTIONS (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)**

Members considered the written report of the Deputy Town Clerk (HF) regarding the recommendation from the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee at its recent meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 regarding the replacement of both boilers at Town House to a single new boiler.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to waive the Financial Regulations (11d) and appoint Bamfords on the basis that only two local companies were interested in carrying out the work; (2) to agree to Bamford's Phase 1 Option 2 proposal and quotations to replace both existing gas boilers in the Town House and install a single new gas boiler and install a new control system (which would zone Town House at different temperature which would give more control of the whole heating systems and should result in greater efficiency and lower costs); (3) to agree in principle to Bamford's Phase 2 to reserve consideration of an air source heat pump to a later date; and (4) to pay for the work from the contingencies budget.

*(voting:8 for; 1 against)*

#### **11/050 RECOMMENDATION FROM BUILDINGS AND CIVIC MATTERS - TOWN HOUSE SOLAR PANELS (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)**

Members considered the written report of the Deputy Town Clerk (HF) regarding the recommendation from the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee at its recent meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 regarding the Town House Solar Panels.

**RESOLVED:** a) to waive the Financial Regulations (11.d) and accept R.E.S.'s proposal and quotation (Option 1 with the ability to add a battery at a later date) subject to the grant of listed building consent and planning permission; (b) to agree to investigate the possibility of obtaining listed building consent and planning permission and to submit the necessary application forms: and (c) to pay for the work from the Climate Change fund which has £25,000 in reserve plus £25,000 in the budget for 2022-23 (a total of £50,000).

*(voting: unanimous)*

#### **11/050 RECOMMENDATION FROM BUILDINGS AND CIVIC MATTERS - MILFORD HALL ENERGY EFFICIENCY OPTIONS (COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE)**

Members considered the written report of the Deputy Town Clerk (HF) regarding the recommendation from the Buildings and Civic Matters Committee at its recent meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 regarding the Milford Hall Energy Efficiency Options.

**RESOLVED:** (1) to waive the Financial Regulations (11.d) and accept R.E.S.'s proposal and quotation (Option 1 with the ability to add a battery at a later date) to supply and install solar panels at Milford Hall at a cost of £15,993 (although costs may now have increased); subject to the agreement of SSDC, and the grant of planning permission; (2) to seek the agreement of SSDC to install the solar panels; (4) to investigate the possibility of obtaining planning permission and submit the application form; and (4) to agree to pay for the work to install the solar panels from the Climate Change fund which has £25,000 in reserve plus £25,000 in the budget for 2022-23 (a total of £50,000); and (5) to waive the Financial Regulations (11d) and accept C W Electrical Solution's proposal to replace the main hall lights with LED and to pay for it from the general Milford Hall expenditure budget.

*(voting: unanimous)*

The meeting closed at 9:06pm.

Signed: ..... (Chair) Date .....