

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2018 AT THE  
CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr C Gorst

Cllrs: M Beanland, L A Clarke, G King, L Podmore, Mrs J Saunders, G Smith  
and Mrs N Wylie

Officers in attendance: L Osborn (Town Clerk), H Barlow (Deputy Town Clerk)  
and T Juss (Minute Taker)

55. Anyone attending or present at the Committee meeting declares that they  
are making, or intend to make, an audio recording and/or film the meeting

The shorthand assistant confirmed that the meeting is recorded for the  
purposes of minute taking and the recording is deleted within a week when draft  
minutes are produced.

There were no other declarations of a recording of the meeting.

56. Questions from members of the public

There were no members of the public in attendance.

57. Apologies for absence

Cllr Mrs R Horsman-Johnson.

58. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

The Chair defined the national rules with regard to consideration of the precept.  
It was confirmed that no dispensation for members was required.

59. Approve as an accurate record the minutes of the previous meeting of the  
Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes  
Committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018 are approved as an  
accurate record (NC)**

60. Note the bank reconciliations for September and October 2018 as verified by the Chairman.

**RESOLVED: That the verbal report from the Chair to confirm that the bank reconciliations for September and October 2018 are received (NC)**

61. Receive and note the payment schedules for September and October 2018

Members reviewed the payment schedules for both September and October 2018. There was a reminder that there was a request for a report on the energy bills for the next committee meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the payment schedules for September and October 2018 are received. That a report is prepared on energy bills for the next committee meeting (NC)**

62. Receive and note the income and expenditure report for April to September 2018 for the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Town Council

Members reviewed the income and expenditure report for April to September 2018 for the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Town Council. The Deputy Town Clerk noted the items of variance from the report received at the previous meeting which has now been updated to six months:

- 1118: CCSO training has been re-coded to 4101; this is under budget.
- 1128: Human Resource costs (including the Health and Safety audit) with a further spend of £1,000 expected for Health and Safety.
- 2178: Civic Hall hire at month 8 is at 83% so significantly over budget.
- 3101: payments for energy have recently been invoiced correctly and brought up to date. Future costs will be higher. The number of LED lights are being reported on an annual basis so this should help reduce costs over time.

There has been no information received on the challenge to the business rates. A response is still awaited.

**RESOLVED: That the income and expenditure report for April to September 2018 for the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Town Council is received and noted (NC)**

63. Review the Finance and General Purposes Committee provisional budget for 2019/2020.

The Deputy Clerk spoke on the Finance and General Purposes Committee provisional budget for 2019/2020 noting the suggested budget differences as follows:

- 1108 Photocopier: in the process of obtaining quotes for the renewal of the contract for the photocopier. The current contract is very expensive. One

quote at £2,600 has been received, this provides a saving of £800. The current photocopying company is suggesting an option of retaining the photocopying machines with reduced rent. A third quote is also being sought.

- 1118 Training: increased to £1,600.
- 1124 Election costs: none.
- 1125 Council web-site costs: slightly reduced.
- 1126 Computer costs: need to be higher than budgeted due to councillor emails, additional security features. There is no capital expenditure required.
- 1128 HR admin: now includes Health and Safety.
- 1134 CAB costs: this will be transferred to the COPS budget and there will be an increase to £16,502 for additional hours.
- 1150 Civic Functions: set at £1,000.
- 1177 Bank interest: this will be increased from £1,500 to £3,000. The Deputy Town Clerk is due to report back on the recommendations with regard to the banking arrangements.
- There is a reduction of £4,000 from the 2018/19 budget to the 2019/20 budget.

Three main future projects will include access to the stage, improvements to the Civic Chamber and work on the drains. Grant funding for the Civic Chamber and accessibility will be explored. The kitchen is not fit for purpose for the type of event requests being received.

**RESOLVED: That the Finance and General Purposes Committee provisional budget for 2019/2020 is approved (NC)**

64. Receive and consider a written brief from the Clerk on the Town Council's budget for 2019/2020, with a recommendation then to be made to the Town Council meeting on Monday 17th December 2018 with regard to the 2019/2020 precept.

Members reviewed the FIED and COPS committee budget and the Deputy Town Clerk noted the entries where changes have been made against the Accountant's preliminary budget.

FIED Budget:

- The business rate figures are based on those provided by the ratings consultant.
- Security has been reduced.
- Salary for the Operations Manager has increased from 20 hours to 28 hours a week.
- The entry for play area security costs have been increased to include the Glastonbury play area. The decision to include the Glastonbury play area is subject to approval.
- Cleaning and maintenance; there is a slight saving.
- Civic Hall hire income has been increased to £50,000.
- The budget for refreshments is slightly higher.

The following points were clarified:

The Civic Hall bar generates no revenue and this is an area where options need to be explored.

The increase in salaries is also due in part to the government pay rises which have had a significant impact for those on the lower end of the pay scale and the Cheshire East Council pension scheme which has an employer contribution of 21.8% and are factored into the costs.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that Civic Hall income has increased at a higher rate than the cost of the supervisors. In 2016/17, Civic Hall hire was £37,000 and supervisor salaries were £8,204. In 2017/18, the Civic Hall income increased by 33% to £50,000 and supervisor salaries increased by only 14%. There are lettings almost every day with two or three bookings on some days.

**COPS:**

The CCSO budget is based on 2 CCSOs, 1 CCSO supervisor and 1 PCSO. There has been a phased approach to the CCSO funding and reserves are being used to cushion the increase; over the next four years the reserves will be used on a diminishing basis. Although the budget line is increasing every year, it is not yet quite meeting the expenditure. In four years time the expenditure will have been met by the increases in budget. This year there is likely to be a £20,000 underspend due to gaps in staffing and this will be moved into the reserves. Costs for CCSO equipment need to be covered; the cost of equipment is about £5,000. A member noted that the equipment will also need to be appropriately insured and there will also be maintenance costs. The Deputy Clerk noted that the CCSO code will be split to provide more detailed information for future CCSO developments.

The Christmas Fest budget has been increased to £5,000.

The Town Clerk spoke on the written brief on the Town Council's budget for 2019/2020, with a recommendation then to be made to the Town Council meeting on Monday 17th December 2018 with regard to the 2019/2020 precept. Members reviewed the three options 10d, 10e and 10f as outlined in the report.

Members debated the options. A member noted that any increase in the precept should be minimal and not in excess of inflation.

A member proposed Option 3 because it covers the expenditure while allocating £10,000 to the Rolling Capital Fund. This is an increase of 8.69% for a Band D household. A member noted that a clear message is required to outline the benefit of the identified projects.

**RESOLVED: That Option 3 (10f) is approved as the recommendation to the Town Council meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018 as the precept for 2019/20 (4 for, 4 against)**

A member proposed Option 2 (10e) where the allocation to the Rolling Capital Fund is £5,000. This is an increase of 7.54% for a Band D household.

**RESOLVED: That Option 2 (10e) is approved as the recommendation to the Town Council meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018 as the precept for 2019/20 (NC)**

65. Receive and note the letter from Cllr Paul Bates, Cheshire East Council Finance and Communication Portfolio Holder, concerning the precept and taxbase arrangements for 2019/2020, dated 5th November 2018.

**RESOLVED: That the letter from Cllr Paul Bates, Cheshire East Council Finance and Communication Portfolio Holder, concerning the precept and taxbase arrangements for 2019/2020, dated 5th November 2018 is received and noted (NC)**

66. Receive and consider the information about the Cheshire East Council pre-budget consultation 2019/2022 to 14th December 2018.

Members considered the information about the Cheshire East Council pre-budget consultation 2019/2022 to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018. It was noted that Cheshire East Council are no longer receiving any revenue support grant from central government. This is a negative impact of £40 million. The proposed increase in the Cheshire East Council precept is 2.99%, of this 1% is ring fenced for Children and Families Service. The allocation to the Children and Families Service is to assist with areas such as SEND, Cared for Children, help address the shortage of foster carers and transport costs for vulnerable pupils.

It was noted that for the Poynton Relief Road there is a proposed start date for work to commence in 2019 and end in 2021.

**RESOLVED: That the information about the Cheshire East Council pre-budget consultation 2019/2022 to 14<sup>th</sup> December 2018 is received (NC)**

67. Consider and agree any communication messages arising from this meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the agreed communication messages arising from this meeting is to draft the communication for the Town Council precept including the good work and noting that councillors are in an unpaid role (NC)**

Meeting end time: 9.25pm

Chair.....

Dated.....