



ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee

Time and date

6.00pm, Wednesday, 14 October 2020

Place

Virtual On-Line Meeting via Zoom

Details of Attendance:

Cllr R Meyer (Chairman) (P) Cllr D Coole (Vice Chairman) (P) Cllr J Coole (P) Cllr C Ecclestone (P)
Cllr L Gregori (P) Cllr R Hughes (P) Cllr D Treadwell (P) (Arrived at 6.17pm)

Officers Present:

Wendy Coulter (Town Clerk)
Tor Warburton (Deputy Clerk)
Michelle Young (Committee & GDPR Officer) (Taking the Minutes)

Other Councillors: Councillor B long

Members of the Public: 1

Members of the Press: 1

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor R Meyer handed the meeting over to the Vice Chairman, Councillor D Coole.

BS 095/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies submitted at the meeting.

BS 096/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made relevant to the Agenda.

BS 097/19 MINUTES

Councillor D Coole requested an amendment to the Minutes, BS 089/19 Standing Orders Review. It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by Councillor R Meyer that the amended Minutes of the Budgets & Staffing Committee meeting held on 2 September 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

A recorded vote was as follows:

For: Councillors D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone, L Gregori, R Hughes and R Meyer.

Unanimous

RESOLVED: That the amended Minutes of the Budgets & Staffing Committee meeting held on 2 September 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

BS 098/19 ACTION PLAN

Members noted the Action Plan.

Councillor D Coole thanked the Town Clerk for producing the Action Plan.

BS 099/19 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no Members of the Public whom spoke at the meeting.

BS 100/19 VIREMENT OF 2019/2020 BUDGET UNDERSPEND

(Councillor D Treadwell joined the meeting at 6.17pm)

Members received and considered recommendations from Standing Committees, for the allocation of the 2019/2020 budget underspend from their temporary vired holding in Operational Reserves to specific budget lines within Earmarked Reserves.

The Chairman of Planning Committee made a suggestion as follows:

That as CIL monies had been approved for the funding of the Speed Indicator Signs (SIDs), that the proposed virement of £10,000 from the 2019/2020 budget underspend for the SIDs went into CIL allocation.

That the £10,000 for Neighbourhood Plan in other wards be reduced to £5,000.

That the £5,000 for the St Marys Ward Neighbourhood Plan remained the same.

The total proposed virement amount would be £10,000 and not the previously recommended amount of £25,000.

It was noted that the total proposed virements needed to be reduced to meet the £53,500 ceiling.

A Member commented that the proposed virements from the Assets and Communities Committee be removed on the basis these were aspirational and not actual services currently being undertaken by the Town Council. The vice Chairman suggested that the Assets and Communities Committee proposal for the Vigo Park Improvements be reduced from £32,000 to £27,000.

It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by Councillor J Coole that it be recommended for approval at the 21 October 2020 full Council meeting or one thereafter, the following:

- a) To create an Earmarked Reserves heading wording for the Public Realm Cemeteries.
- b) To transfer the 2019/2020 budget underspend to the following Earmarked Reserves headings and any balance to be transferred to the General Reserves:
 - Vigo Park - £27,000
 - Public Toilets - £8,500
 - Public Realm - £5,000
 - Cemeteries - £3,000
 - St Mary's Ward neighbourhood Plan - £5,000
 - Other Wards Neighbourhood Plan - £ 5,000

A Member raised a concern that the Town Council is creating reserves for services that are currently being provided by the Test Valley Borough Council or Hampshire County Council and that the Town Council should be concentrating on the core services it does provide.

Due to the Allotment Committee not being able to meet and discuss the 2019/2020 Budget Underspend in time for this Policy & Resources Committee meeting, a request had been received by the Chairman of the Allotment Committee in the form of a Motion as follows:

Proposer: Cllr Luigi Gregori

Seconders: Cllr Robin Hughes, Cllr Lauren Banville

USING UNDERSPEND MONIES TOWARDS BUYING AN ALLOTMENT SITE FOR NORTH ANDOVER

Background

There is a shortage of allotments on the north side of Andover. Future developments will not provide a significant uplift, and ATC will continue to struggle in terms of capacity.

Under s 25 of the Small Holding and Allotments Act 1908, ATC can purchase or lease land both within and outside our parish for allotments.

Having taken soundings from estate agents, the cost of an acre on the north side varies between £15-50k depending on the amenities available. Furthermore, unlike the south side of Andover, where there are available sites, the north side is pretty sparse.

The Allotments Committee have discussed how small sites are uneconomical and difficult. One acre only provides 16 full plots without taking into account parking, paths and other amenities. ATC will also have to spend a fair amount of money to turn agricultural land into a proper allotment site.

Motion

To set aside £50,000 from this year's underspend towards the cost of an allotment site on the north side of town.

It was commented that the Motion did not specifically address the 2019/2020 budget underspend and could be interpreted as being referred to the 2020/2021 budget underspend, of which the current amount is £7,984.00. The current year's underspend cannot be considered until March 2021.

The proposer and seconder were invited to amend the Motion.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor Hughes that the Motion be amended to "To set aside £50,000 from the 2019/2020 budget underspend towards the cost of an allotment site on the north side of town."

A recorded vote was as follows:

For: Councillors L Gregori and R Hughes

Against: Councillors D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone and R Meyer.

Abstention: Councillor D Treadwell.

For 2, Against 4, Abstention 1.

Amendment to the Motion not carried.

Members referred back to the original Motion.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor R Hughes and Councillor L Banville to set aside £50,000 from this year's underspend towards the cost of an allotment site on the north side of town.

A recorded vote was as follows:

For: Councillors L Gregori and R Hughes.

Against: Councillors D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone and R Meyer.

Abstention: Councillor D Treadwell.

For 2, Against 4, Abstention 1.

Motion not carried.

Members referred back to the original resolution.

It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by Councillor J Coole that it be recommended for approval at the 21 October 2020 full Council meeting or one thereafter, the following:

- a) To create an Earmarked Reserves heading wording for the Public Realm Cemeteries.
- b) To transfer the 2019/2020 budget underspend to the following Earmarked Reserves headings and any balance to be transferred to the General Reserves:
 - Vigo Park - £27,000
 - Public Toilets - £8,500
 - Public Realm - £5,000
 - Cemeteries - £3,000
 - St Mary's Ward neighbourhood Plan - £5,000
 - Other Wards Neighbourhood Plan - £ 5,000

A recorded vote was as follows

For: Councillor D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone and R Meyer.

Against: Councillors L Gregori, R Hughes and D Treadwell.

For 4, Against 3.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended for approval at the 21 October 2020 full Council meeting or one thereafter, the following:

- a) **To create an Earmarked Reserves heading wording for the Public Realm Cemeteries.**
- b) **To transfer the 2019/2020 budget underspend to the following Earmarked Reserves headings and any balance to be transferred to the General Reserves:**
 - **Vigo Park - £27,000**
 - **Public Toilets - £8,500**
 - **Public Realm - £5,000**
 - **Cemeteries - £3,000**
 - **St Mary's Ward neighbourhood Plan - £5,000**
 - **Other Wards Neighbourhood Plan - £ 5,000**

BS 101/19

BUDGET FRAMEWORK

Members noted and considered the proposal which clarified parts of the budget process and who was responsible for each part.

It was proposed by Councillor C Ecclestone and seconded by Councillor J Coole that authority be delegated to the relevant Officers/Committees as outlined below:

- To produce a report each year which will include (Responsible Finance Officer):
- Timetable for the Budget Process
- The inflationary predictions to be used
- Salary Review results, to include: Previous years pay rise, additional responsibilities pay increase, Pay Structure (National Joint Council Grading)
- Maintenance of new and existing Earmarked Reserves (Statutory Earmarked Reserves highlighted)
- Expected expenditure for current activities i.e. Christmas Lights, allotments, grants.
- Committee budgets for next year (Committees)
- New items for consideration (Budgets and Staffing Committee)
- Budget recommendations from Budgets and Staffing Committee (full Council)

A recorded vote was as follows:

For: Councillors D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone, L Gregori, R Hughes, R Meyer and D Treadwell.

Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That authority be delegated to the relevant Officers/Committees as outlined below:

- **To produce a report each year which will include (RFO):**
- **Timetable for the Budget Process**
- **The inflationary predictions to be used**
- **Salary Review results, to include: Previous years pay rise, additional responsibilities pay increase, Pay Structure (National Joint Council Grading)**
- **Maintenance of new and existing Earmarked Reserves (Statutory Earmarked Reserves highlighted)**
- **Expected expenditure for current activities i.e. Christmas Lights, allotments, grants.**
- **Committee budgets for next year (Committees)**
- **New items for consideration (Budgets and Staffing Committee)**
- **Budget recommendations from Budgets and Staffing Committee (full Council)**

BS 102/19

DRAFT BUDGET 2020/2021

Members noted the report for the Draft Budget 2021/2022.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that it was a draft budget and it would have to be referred back to the individual Committees for their consideration. It was noted that the budget for Legal Fees had been increased.

It was clarified that this was in preparation for the hiring of a Locum Clerk, which is not salaried. Allotment services had been increased by 15%. It was clarified that this was in preparation for the additional Picket Twenty Allotment Site and general increases in Service costs in the new year. A suggestion was made to add an explanatory note on any budget lines that had changes, in order to aid in the understanding of the budget changes.

The Chairman confirmed that the standing Committees were required to draw up budgets that were as cost effective as possible for consideration at the next Policy & Resources meeting.

Members moved to debate the following Motion. It was noted that Councillor B Long was the seconder of the Motion, however, as a non-member of the Policy & Resources Committee, this would not be possible. Therefore, Councillor R Hughes would be the seconder to the Motion.

Proposer: Cllr Luigi Gregori
Secunder: Cllr Robin Hughes

Background

Currently we have no monies allocated for by-elections. The money put aside for elections is for the 4-year election cycle.

Each by-election costs about £10,000.

Currently we have four vacancies in ATC due to be filled by by-elections.

We have also had to pay in-year for two by-elections caused by vacancies last Financial Year.

Motion

To use £50,000 of the current underspend to cover the unexpected costs of by-elections.

It was commented that the elections had consumed a large sum of money and whilst it is known that the Town Council budget held a set amount for the annual elections, it was highlighted that the Town Council did not have a set budget for by-elections. Concerns were that provisions needed to be made for by-elections, following the recent four Councillor resignations.

Councillor D Coole commented that the current underspend was £7,984.00 and so there was insufficient funds in the current underspend to support the motion.

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor R Hughes to use £50,000 of the current underspend to cover the unexpected costs of by-elections.

A recorded vote was as follows:

For: Councillors L Gregori and R Hughes.

Against: Councillors D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone, R Meyer and D Treadwell.

For 2, Against 5.

Motion not carried.

BS 103/19 EARMARKED AND OPERATIONAL RESERVES

Members reviewed the Earmarked and Operational Reserves.

A member raised an observation on the Assets and Communities resolutions in that the Grants Project, A-Fest and Youth Events lines showed monies as still being held in the Earmarked Reserves. Following the last Policy and Resources meeting, these should have been transferred and the lines amended to read zero.

Another Member questioned whether it was in the capacity of the Policy and Resources Committee to make these changes. The Town Clerk confirmed that Committees can suggest any changes and amendments as recommendations, that must be approved at full Council.

It was agreed that the Assets and Communities recommendations would be put forward at the next full Council meeting.

BS 104/19 FIVE YEAR BUDGET

Members noted that only the Assets and Communities Committee had provided a 5 Year budget Plan at this point of the meeting. It was agreed that Policy and Resources Committee would consider a 5 Year Budget Plan as soon as possible, which included inflationary increases and any identified costs, which would be provided to the Town Clerk for the next Committee Meeting.

BS 105/19 POLICY AND STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

Members noted that the Standing Orders were continuing to be reviewed and that the revised versions would be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 18 November 2020.

A Member commented that it was the responsibility of the Policy and Resources Committee to review the Standing Orders. It was requested that the current draft Standing Orders be issued to the members of the Policy and Resources Committee the next day, for the Members' consideration and decision as to whether to form a Working Group to take forward.

Another Member further commented that the individual Committees should be responsible for reviewing their relevant policies before going to Policy and Resources for final review and recommendation to full Council for approval.

The Chairman proposed two resolutions.

It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by J Coole that the Town Clerk be instructed to email the Committee Members on the 15 October 2020, a copy of the draft Standing Orders as is and that Members advise the Town Clerk by 27 October 2020, if they want to form a working group to review the Standing Orders. To instruct the Town Clerk to email the Committee Members by 27 October 2020, a quarterly prioritised list of policies to be reviewed each quarter, with the end of the first quarter being 31 March 2021. The list to also include the lead Committee and lead Officer. This will hopefully put the statutory policies first that must be updated and then we can have quarterly reviews carried out by relevant Committees and then come back to this Committee.

A recorded vote was as follows:

For: Councillors D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone, L Gregori, R Hughes, R Meyer and D Treadwell.

Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be instructed to email the Committee Members on the 15 October 2020, a copy of the draft Standing Orders as is and that Members advise the Town Clerk by 27 October 2020, if they want to form a working group to review the Standing Orders. To instruct the Town Clerk to email the Committee Members by 27 October 2020, a quarterly prioritised list of policies to be reviewed each quarter, with the end of the first quarter being 31 March 2021. The list to also include the lead Committee and lead Officer. This will hopefully put the statutory policies first that must be updated and then we can have quarterly reviews carried out by relevant Committees and then come back to this Committee.

BS 106/19 PROVISION OF TOILETS ON ALLOTMENT SITES

Members were informed that the Allotments Committee were currently looking g at the provision of compostable toilets for the allotment sites.

It was questioned as to why the Town Council was currently renting toilets for the sites that remained locked and out of use. The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that the Town Council were bidding by the contract with the provider of the toilets. It was suggested that the Officers investigate whether a reduced rate could be agreed or the removal of the toilets completely.

BS 107/19 MEMBERS TRAINING

Members considered a draft training programme which included a list of suggested courses provided by Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) and Surrey Hill Solicitors, as requested by the Town Councillors. It was commented that an "Introduction to Appraisals" would be useful and should be included. Members did not advise the Officers of any courses they would be interested in attending during the meeting.

It was agreed that Officers would arrange visits to successful Town Council(s) for the Andover Town Council Members.

It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by Councillor C Ecclestone that the meeting be extended by one and a half hours, beyond the 2-hour time limit.

A recorded vote was as follows:

For: Councillors D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone, L Gregori, R Hughes, R Meyer and D Treadwell.

Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That the meeting be extended by one and a half hours, beyond the 2-hour time limit.

BS 108/19 OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Members noted the update report on the management of the Town Council Offices – **attached at record Minutes.**

Officer also gave an update of the purchase of a sign for the Town Council Offices and confirmed that three quotes had been received and awaited a further two. A further update will be received at the next committee meeting.

A Member enquired about the progress of work to find ways to make the Town Council offices Covid safe. The Vice Chairman confirmed that that particular item was being dealt with separately.

BS 109/19 WORK PROGRAMME

It was agreed that the Work Programme would include the following:

- Members Training

BS 110/19 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Members were advised by the Vice Chairman, that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would be absent at the next scheduled Policy and resources meeting on the 11 November 2020, due to a Test Valley Borough Council meeting. Therefore, Members noted that the date of the next meeting had been rescheduled and was **Wednesday 18 November 2020, virtually via Zoom starting at 6.00pm.**

BS 111/19 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor D Coole and seconded by Councillor J Coole that Members of the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting at item 18 due to consideration of the Andover Levy and Staffing matters, which contained sensitive commercial and personnel information.

A recorded vote was as follows:

For: Councillors D Coole, J Coole, C Ecclestone, L Gregori, R Hughes, R Meyer and D Treadwell.

Unanimous.

RESOLVED: That Members of the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting at item 18 due to consideration of the Andover Levy and Staffing matters, which contained sensitive commercial and personnel information.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.21pm.

Chairman

Date