

MINUTES of the FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE meeting held at Felixstowe Town Hall on Wednesday 23 November 2016 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr G Newman (Chairman) Cllr Jan Garfield
Cllr S Bird (Vice-Chairman) Cllr D Savage
Cllr N Barber Cllr A Smith
Cllr M Deacon Cllr S Wiles
Cllr S Gallant Cllr K Williams

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Finance Administration Officer)

342. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

343. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

| Member(s) | Minute No. | Nature of Interest |
|---|-------------------|--|
| Cllr S Bird Cllr M Deacon Cllr S Gallant Cllr D Savage Cllr A Smith | All | Local Non-Pecuniary (as Members of Suffolk Coastal District Council) |
| Cllr G Newman Cllr N Barber | All | Local Non-Pecuniary (as a Members of Suffolk County Council) |

344. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

There were none.

345. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 28 September 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

346. BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 OCTOBER 2016

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 31 October 2016.

A list of those items of expenditure exceeding budget estimates for the period by 10% or £500 was considered. Members discussed various elements of income and expenditure.

It was **RESOLVED** that the budget monitoring report to 31 October 2016 be noted with no other action required at this time.

347. INTERNAL AUDIT – QUARTER TWO

Committee considered the Internal Audit report for the period ending 30 September 2016. The Auditor found no issues to report and has commended Council for the way it is governed and managed. Committee discussed the Auditor's suggestion of a reduction in the frequency of Council's internal audits from quarterly to biannual.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the report of the Internal Auditor be noted;**
- ii. for the purpose of budget setting and in the next review of its internal financial controls in January 2017, Committee recommends to Council a reduction in the frequency of its internal audits to biannual.**

348. MAYORAL ALLOWANCE 2017/18

Committee discussed the Mayoral Allowance and potentially reducing this by £1,000, in order to increase the Civic Events budget so that Council is able to meet the cost of the Mayor's Civic Reception. Discussion took place regarding whether the Mayoral allowance was sufficient to defray the cost of the office of Town Mayor, it was agreed to review after one year and to request the forthcoming Mayor to input into the review process after their year in office.

Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council that:

- i. the Mayor's Allowance for 2017/18 be set at £6,000 for the purpose of defraying the costs associated with the office of Town Mayor;**
- ii. a further £1,000 be added to the existing Civic Events budget to be put towards the cost of the Mayor's Civic Reception.**

349. BUDGET 2017/18 (First Draft)

Committee considered the papers showing a first draft full budget, including earmarked reserves requirements for 2017/18. Members also considered comparisons against the current-year budget, actual expenditure and projected outturn for the full year 2016/17.

The Clerk advised that Suffolk Coastal District Council had confirmed Felixstowe Town Council's tax base for 2017/18 to be 8,162.47. It was noted that the current year would be the final year in which the Local Council Tax Scheme grant would be received.

It was noted that the draft budget proposals for 2017/18 required a precept of £549,742. Using the confirmed tax base this would equate to £67.35 per Council Tax Band D equivalent ratepayer. It was noted that the Band D equivalent for the years 2016/17, 2015/16 and 2014/15 had also been £67.35.

On the basis that the budget estimates 2017/18 would result in a 0% change/nil tax increase to local residents, Committee recommended that the budget be referred to Council for approval.

Committee discussed reducing the proposed transfers in to the Community Fund Earmarked reserve to allow the Occasional Grants budget to be increased by a further £10,000 to £25,000 for 2017/18. It was agreed that this amendment, plus any adjustments to the budget deemed appropriate by the Town Clerk which would not cause the total requirement to change, be recommended to Council in January for final consideration.

Members recorded a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and Finance Officer for their work on the budget estimates and their presentation.

Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council that:

- i. the Occasional Grants budget be increased by £10,000 to £25,000 for 2017/18 with the funding being made available via a reduction in the proposed transfer to the Community Fund Earmarked Reserve; and,**
- ii. subject to the above amendment and any further adjustments to the budget deemed appropriate by the Town Clerk which would not cause the total requirement to change, the draft budget 2017/18 proposals be recommended to Council for approval as presented.**

350. PROPOSED MERGER OF SUFFOLK COASTAL & WAVENEY DISTRICT COUNCILS

Committee considered the information on the proposed merger of Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils. Members were generally supportive of the proposals and clear about the financial benefit but were concerned about how this might affect the number of district councillor for Felixstowe and corresponding electoral wards.

It was felt that any decrease to the number of district councillors for Felixstowe would lead to an increase in the workload for those representing the town to a larger 'East Suffolk District Council'.

It was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk should respond to the consultation on the basis above.

351. SUFFOLK LOCAL POLICING REVIEW (SLPR) – REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

The Town Council had been invited to feedback on the impact of the changes embedded since the Suffolk Local Policing Review (SLPR) in April.

Members were concerned that the changes had resulted in a significant detrimental effect on the policing cover provided to Felixstowe residents.

Committee remained unconvinced of the benefits of the SLPR since its introduction in April 2016 and considers it to be fundamentally flawed for all the reasons put to the PCC back in January 2016.

Members commented that the significant reduction in the staffing levels of the SNT, coupled with the reduction in late shift working, had resulted in a marked decrease in the visibility of community officers in the early evenings. In turn, this had led to corresponding increase in instances of Anti-Social Behaviour and criminal damage.

It was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk should respond to the PCC on the basis above with a request that the police presence be increased and a return of the response hub to Felixstowe.

352. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 21.20pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for 25 January 2017 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____