



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Monday 19th October 2020 at 7pm

PRESENT

Councillors: G. Carpenter, L. Holt (Chairman), R. Robinson, B. Schofield, S. Tilley, P. Wildsmith, G. Woods.

Also Present: Janet Stanton - Town Clerk
Susanna Walker - Committee Clerk
Wendy Allen - Office Manager
Alex Robins - Harlington General Manager

PF October 2020 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES

Members received and accepted apologies for absence from Councillor Einchcomb, who was away .

PF October 2020 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations on interest.

PF October 2020 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

PF October 2020 ITEM 4

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on Monday 20th July 2020 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

PF October 2020 ITEM 5

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The members considered the commentary of the Town Clerk with an overview of the financial performance July 2020 – September 2020, together with all the income and expenditure, cash book, bank reconciliation, list of payments, balance sheet and quarterly monitoring.

The members considered:

- a. Quarterly Report
- aa. Harlington Monthly Performance totals 2020/2021
- b. 2020-21 projections & draft 21-22 budget at 30th September 2020
- c. Balance sheet as at 30th September 2020
- d. Budget detail as at 30th September 2020
- e. Income and expenditure detail as at 30th September 2020
- f. Reserves as at 30th September 2020
- g. Bank Reconciliation - 31st July 2020
- gg. Bank Reconciliation – 31st August 2020
- ggg. Bank Reconciliation - 30th September 2020

- h. Cash Book - 31st July 2020
- hh. Cash Book - 31st August 2020
- hhh. Cash Book - 30th September 2020
- i. List of Payments + BACS - 31st July 2020
- ii. List of Payments + BACS - 31st August 2020
- iii. List of Payments + BACS - 30th September 2020
- j. Q2 VAT return
- k. Debtors List

The following matters were raised and discussed:

- The last quarterly report shows a budget shortfall of £217,520.00. This figure has now been reduced to £183,608.00.
- The COVID19 costs are being included under one cost code, incorporating all things that couldn't have been budgeted for before the pandemic. The total of £40,000.00 includes:
 - £20,000.00 for Fleet Town Pedestrianisation.
 - £15,000.00 for streaming at the Harlington.
 - £5,000.00 for additional costs such as hand sanitisers in the building.
- Football has now started again in the parks and is included in the projected income.
- **Cemetery**
 - The cemetery income has exceeded budget for the year 2020/2021. This is due to plots being reserved and bought, and not as a result of the current pandemic.
- **Harlington**
 - A number of socially distanced events have been organised, including Jazz and Comedy nights.
 - The maximum capacity in the Harlington is 120 people, which is approximately a 50% reduction on previous events.
 - All events are seated at tables of 2, 4 or 6 and are in line with the current Government guidelines
 - At the time of the meeting, 69 tickets had been sold for Jazz night on 20th October 2020 and 50 tickets had been sold for Comedy night on Saturday 24th October 2020.
 - The app for bar orders is not ready to use yet.
 - Live streaming equipment is not finalised, but should be ready to use by mid-November 2020.
 - Potential use of the Harlington as office facility for those people not wishing to work remotely from home alone.
 - Coffee shop is closed indefinitely.

RESOLVED

1. To receive and accept into the minutes
 - a. Quarterly Report
 - aa. Harlington Monthly Performance totals 2020/2021
 - b. 2020-21 projections & draft 21-22 budget at 30th September 2020
 - c. Balance sheet as at 30th September 2020
 - d. Budget detail as at 30th September 2020
 - e. Income and expenditure detail as at 30th September 2020
 - f. Reserves as at 30th September 2020
 - g. Bank Reconciliation - 31st July 2020
 - gg. Bank Reconciliation – 31st August 2020
 - ggg. Bank Reconciliation - 30th September 2020
 - h. Cash Book - 31st July 2020
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 - i. List of Payments + BACS - 31st July 2020
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2. Councillor Robinson confirmed that the bank reconciliation for July, August and September 2020 equals zero, and the bank statements match the reconciliation and has signed the bank statements and payment schedules.

PF October 2020 ITEM 6

INVESTMENT REPORT

Members received and considered the quarterly investment report.

RESOLVED

To note the balances held in the Fleet Town Council Accounts.

PF October 2020 ITEM 7

THE BUDGET

Members received and considered the proposed budget based on the Policy and Finance Working Group recommendation and the Council resolution of 7th October 2020 of no increase in Council Tax. Members discussed the following:

- Should the current situation continue, use of Earmarked Reserve money to cover any deficit until the second half of the next fiscal year, assuming that the second half is back to normal.
- Planning for a worst case scenario for the whole of the next fiscal year.
- The P&F committee to recommend to Council that there will be a deficit and will be drawing on reserves. The worst case is that there are sufficient reserves to last another budget year. The Harlington Development fund will continue to be earmarked.
- The budget for 2021/2022 will be recast from time to time in line with Government COVID guidelines,
- The current situation is putting a strain on all areas of the budget. FTC staff are multi-skilling, to maximise benefit and reduce the demand of zero hours contract staff during this time.
- FTC is supporting the Kickstart scheme, and has identified 3 roles in different areas, to give young people an opportunity to work and gain experience. There is no guarantee of a job at the end of the 6 months.
- The office space allows for social distancing.

Members considered the proposal of no increase to the Council Tax for the budget year 2021/2022 and discussed the following:

- If the precept is reduced for 2021/2022, then the reserves are consequently reduced for the future.
- During this current situation, a small reduction in the FTC portion of Council Tax results in a tiny saving in the overall Council tax.
- FTC will need to make a decision about the future of the Harlington, as it will either need refurbishing or a new Harlington built with the new HDC Civic Quarter development.
- The money in the Harlington Development fund potentially reduces the length of any loan taken out and reduces money on the interest.
- Every year that money is collected for the Harlington Development, saves almost double on the loan interest eg.

ORIGINAL LOAN	COST OF INTEREST per annum	REPAID IN
£10,000,000.00	£412,000.000	42 years
£8,400,000.00 (<i>original loan less funds already covered</i>)	£405,000.00	42 years (<i>a saving of £3,020,000.00 in interest</i>)
£8,400,000.00 (<i>original loan less funds already covered</i>)	£412,000.000	27 years (<i>a saving of £5,300,000.00 in interest</i>)

- The budget 2020/2021 is a maintenance budget, which has not given FTC the ability to add any new services.

Member agreed that the precept should not be reduced but that there will be no increase in Council Tax for the budget year 2021/2022. It was therefore

RESOLVED

To recommend to the council meeting the adoption of the proposed budget for 2021/2022 based on the last P&F meeting recommendations, the same Council Tax rate as 2020 and to use the reserves to balance the budget in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

PF October 2020 ITEM 8

REVIEW OF POLICIES

Further to the review timetable agreed at the meeting of the P&F Committee on 22nd May 2017, members received and reviewed the following policies:

a. Standing Orders

Members reviewed and approved the Standing Order Policy.

b. Grant Policy

Members reviewed and approved the Grant Policy.

It was proposed that FTC should be more proactive and established in the community in supporting smaller and local charities, rather than large UK wide charities. Members agreed that the current list of grants be reviewed and that Councillor Tilley undertake a general review of FTC's grants and the local community charities, and present a report to a P&F Committee Working Group prior to the P&F Committee meeting in February 2021.

c. Memorials Policy

Members discussed the scattering of ashes in local parks and the Garden of Remembrance. FTC wants to be a council that supports people, and not discouraging to ashes being scattered in local areas.

Members agreed to bring the Memorials Policy back to the next P&F Committee meeting in February 2021.

d. Open Air Civic Events Policy

Members reviewed and approved the Open Air Civic Events Policy.

Members agreed that *point 7. The Council will not support any events that include balloons into the atmosphere* needed rewording. Members suggested that this point include lanterns and fireworks, and anything that is released into the atmosphere.

Members also agreed that the need for a bond on occasions, in item 4.3.5 should be included, even though it is included in the event application form.

e. Co-Option Policy

Members reviewed and approved the Co-Option Policy.

Members noted the additional line referring to Co-Option during a Virtual Council meeting and the candidates being offline whilst voting takes place. Members agreed that the amendment should include that during COVID, there will have to be a recognised vote for each member which will remain confidential.

f. Park Development Policy

Members reviewed and approved the Park Development Policy.

g. Freedom of Information

Members reviewed and approved the Freedom of Information Policy.

RESOLVED

Members agreed to:

1. To approve the following policies with a review due date of October 2023:
Standing Orders
Grant Policy
Open Air Civic Events Policy
Co-Option Policy
Park Development Policy
Freedom of Information

2. To bring the following policy back to P&F Committee meeting on 15th February 2021:
Memorials Policy

PF October 2020 ITEM 9 CLERKS REPORT

Members received the report from the Town Clerk and noted the following:

- Calthorpe Park Insurance will go out to tender in 2021.
- FTC is still awaiting a response from Zurich regarding the Business Continuity Insurance claim.
- FTC and the Harlington now need to use a different debit card machine, to accept higher values of payment.
- The Point has approached FTC to support a crisis shelter / centre project on a Friday and Saturday night. This will support young people in the local area. Should this go ahead, all health and safety and safeguarding issues will be dealt with beforehand. Members agreed that in principle, the committee would support this but subject to receipt of further information.

PF October 2020 ITEM 10 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next virtual meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee will be held on Monday 15th February 2021 at 7pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed: **Date**.....

Chairman