

CHANDLER'S FORD PARISH COUNCIL – POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

18 July 2022

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Chairman Cllr Pragnell; Councillors Abraham, Bicknell, Davies, Evans and Jones.

In Attendance: Cllr Johnson and Hilary Blaker (Deputy Finance Officer [DFO]).

Public Participation:

There were no members of the public present.

1. APOLOGIES

There were apologies from Cllrs Mrs Broadhurst, Child, Duguid and Scott. Duncan Murray (Parish Clerk) had also sent his apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE 21 FEBRUARY 2022 COMMITTEE MEETING ALREADY AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL 21 MARCH 2022.

These were ACCEPTED.

4. MATTERS FOR RESOLUTION

a. To identify the tasks for the committee in the next 6 months i.e.: -

- i. review of Financial Regulations,**
- ii. Standing Orders,**
- iii. Terms of Reference for Committees and**
- iv. Operational/Financial Risk Assessments.**

Following debate, it was agreed to review the Terms of Reference for the Policy and Finance committee first followed by the Asset Management Committee and to ask the Chair of that committee to attend the meeting so that his views could be taken into consideration. The debate on each item should be limited to 30 minutes and be scheduled for the meeting on the 12 September.

It was recognised that the Financial Risk Assessment would need to be reviewed in March after the Internal Auditor had completed his contributions to it.

b. To initiate a review of the accounting, invoicing and banking arrangements of the council, primarily whether a move from Sage to a 'Sector Specific' accounting package would be advantageous.

Members appreciated the enormity of the task and that significant potential risks had to be mitigated. A request was made to discover whether Sage had any modules that could be added on to make it more sector specific. Members also expressed concern about the transfer of data and ensuring its integrity.

A first draft of the review was requested for September's committee meeting. It was agreed that this would be a starting point, which might well create more questions than the potential answers it might give.

c. Early considerations for the 2023-24 Precept.

A Member enquired as to the level of Reserves and whether the Council had 6-months expenditure in reserve. A recent report to EBC's Cabinet was also mentioned and that it might be worth Members reading it. Members also asked various questions about other councils and what they were doing. The deputy RFO responded that we were initiating the discussion early due to a communication from the Internal Auditor. Officers were asked to prepare drafts based on a 2.5, 5 and 7.5% increase to the Precept. Questions were also asked about what others were doing locally about their pricing, and whether we should consult.

5. TO NOTE THE FINANCIAL REPORTS:

i. To receive the 1st Quarter's financial reports.

These were received, the key differences Actual to Budget were noted as follows:

Income: Fryern is £2.4k up on budget, Hiltingbury is also up on budget by £5.3k – Grants are down £19k, but this is just the slightly late receipt of the grant for the footpath. Events income is up due to the receipt of the sponsorship monies after the event was held.

Expenditure: Direct Costs are up by £11k – due to where the footpath costs were posted (N/C 5008 which is more accurate than being posted just in capital expenditure); Allotments up by £610 mainly due to the need to pump out the two septic tanks at Eagle Close and due to the Rodent control being costed to the allotments (rather than more generically as it had been in the past) Hiltingbury costs are £2k down; Fryern are up due to £630 on boiler repairs and also £200 to replace two burned out urns; Funtasia costs were £9.7k against a budget figure of £8k but as said in the income bit earlier the sponsorship came through later than it used to as all the printing was paid for directly (by J Rees).

Overheads: Grants are up due to the delayed release of GTY event grants in March; Salaries are down by a month as there hasn't been time to put on the June one with Hilary being off last week; motor expenses are up by £724 due to unanticipated MOT/Service costs; 'Pavilion Extension' is actually the capital cost for the car park works at Hiltingbury which were not included in the budget in January; Cleaning is up on budget due to the prepayment of the Initial contract for the year; Bank charges have increased due to increased use of Stripe for payments; subscriptions are down because HALC sent out their invoice rather early this year so it was a prepayment at the end of the year.

A request was made that the Sportshall and Fryer Pavilion expenditure be included for future meetings (*post meeting note: this would be duplicating AMC's role and is outside the Terms of Reference of this committee*). There was also a request for the original Business Case for the Sportshall to be circulated (*post meeting note: this became irrelevant when the first budget including the Sportshall was adopted, as prior to this the pricing hadn't been set neither had the business model the council had decided to follow*). The grants we applied for was also questioned (*post meeting note: many grants are blocked for our sector as we have a precept, however we have successfully gained s106 contributions and ERDF funds in the past two years*).

ii. to agree the payments made from the SAGE payment summary, to authorise payments due, to sign cheques.

Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands these were AGREED.

7. TO MATTERS TO BE TAKEN TO THE COMMITTEE'S NEXT AGENDA.

A request was made that the Payments Made report be produced in Excel, so that headers were available on each page. Reserves were requested to be reviewed; Code of Conduct (statutory instrument) and Dignity at Work be reviewed and circulated to all councillors; review of website; review of external communications.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date was confirmed as Monday 12 September 2022, at Fryern Pavilion.

That being all the business the meeting closed at 8.40p.m.

Chairman.....