

CHANDLER'S FORD PARISH COUNCIL – POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

21 November 2022

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Chairman Cllr Pragnell; Councillors Child, Davies, Evans, Mrs Broadhurst and Scott.

In Attendance: Cllr A Broadhurst, with Duncan Murray (Parish Clerk) and Hilary Blaker (Deputy Finance Officer [DFO]).

Public Participation:

There was one member of the public present who enquired whether the Planning Sub-committee's minutes would be published. The Clerk answered that sub-committee meetings were not normally public meetings, however the Terms of Reference for this sub-committee meant that the public were able to attend. However, he commented that all responses were required to be ratified by the Planning Committee when it met, and therefore the planning responses would be published.

1. APOLOGIES

There were apologies from Cllrs, Bicknell, Duguid and Jones. Cllr Abraham was not present.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE 24 OCTOBER 2022 COMMITTEE MEETING.

Having been checked for accuracy, following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands these were AGREED and signed by the Chairman.

4. MATTERS FOR RESOLUTION

- a. **To discuss and agree the advice from Utility Aid (NALC's partner in the energy crisis) that the council should authorise the gaining of energy contracts on 22 November 2022 that will enable the council to secure (in advance of the ending of the current contracts) the best advised energy prices for 2023-24.**

The Clerk confirmed to Members that the item had been included in this Committee's Agenda with the consent of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Asset Management Committee. Members asked how long any contract would be, the Clerk answered that the length of contract would be dependant on the terms being offered and that due diligence would be followed in terms of both the financial security of the supplier and the price.

Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands the Clerk was authorised to seek new contracts from June 2023, from the supplier he deemed most suitable.

- b. **To agree the implementation of the National Pay Award effective from 1 April 2022.**

The Clerk confirmed that the Committee was authorised in the Delegation Scheme to confirm and implement the National Pay Award. It had also been discussed at the HR Committee that the pay award should be resolved at the earliest opportunity.

It was noted that the Council had adopted the National Pay Scheme in 2010.

Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands the implementation of the pay award for 2022, back dated to 1 April was AGREED.

- c. **To continue the review of the accounting, invoicing and banking arrangements of the council.**

The DFO gave the banking cost comparisons between Barclays and Unity Trust, and that there were significant savings to be made as well as a 3-stage authorisation process (if requested). The attachment was sent out after the meeting for further information.

More details about Scribe and the savings available (removal of accountants' fees, savings in bookings management software and greater cross-module integration) enabling officers to work smarter.

Officers were requested to research further information, as part of due diligence tests, including councils' feedback on Scribe, security of the cloud-based system, back-up frequency and prior testing of updates before release to all customers.

d. To review the draft of the meeting schedule for 2023, and make a recommendation to Council for its adoption (previously circulated to Members 03/09/22 – note additional Bank Holiday 8 May 2023).

An extra P&F meeting was requested around May, due to the additional Bank Holiday in May 2023 the only date available was Wednesday 31 May at 7.00pm as it was half-term and the Brownies would have that week off.

Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands it was AGREED to make a RECOMMENDATION to Full Council that the dates be AGREED along with the provision of the additional P&F meeting on 31 May 2023.

e. To discuss and agree whether to make the grant requested by Men's Shed for £1,000.

One Member questioned the time it had taken for the grant application to come to committee for decision. The Clerk responded that the cancelled September meeting's Agenda had been carried forwards to October and there had been no room for any further items.

The value of the Men's Shed was discussed and agreed and following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands the grant of £1,000 was approved.

f. Ongoing website review.

The DFO explained that behind the scenes coding errors had been rectified, the Declarations of Interests had been uploaded and the new, simpler cookie policy had been updated along with the website accessibility policy. Certain aspects of the website were somewhat 'clunky' at the present time due to the updates being done behind the scenes.

A Member asked about hits and Google Analytics (post meeting note, Analytics had been historically set up for the website, but not activated by a previous officer).

The DFO would arrange a virtual meeting to facilitate progress with E-Mango the website provider.

g. External communications.

A Member enquired as to whether the council had an External Communications Strategy and associated KPIs in place. The Clerk said no. The Member continued that there needed to be a coherency across all communications, newsletter, social media and website and suggested a Working Group. It was mentioned that the new use of the Discover magazine would give a more consistent format and greater reach.

5. TO NOTE THE FINANCIAL REPORTS:

i. 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. Recent saving on Barclaycard provision were mentioned.

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

An update on the website review, budget and the future financial control software/banking provision.

7. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date was confirmed as Monday 23 January 2023, at Fryern Pavilion.

That being all the business the meeting closed at 8.50p.m.

Chairman.....