

CHANDLER'S FORD PARISH COUNCIL – POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

25 OCTOBER 2021

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Chairman Cllr Child; Councillors Atkinson, Bourne, Broadhurst, Dolbear, Holden-Brown and Ricketts

In Attendance: Duncan Murray (Parish Clerk) and Hilary Blaker (Deputy Finance Officer [DFO]).

Public Participation:

There were no members of the public present.

1. APOLOGIES

There were apologies from Cllr Bicknell, and Cllr Johnson was not present.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE'S MEETING OF 26 JULY 2021 AGREED AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF 27 SEPTEMBER 2021.

These were ACCEPTED.

4. MATTERS FOR RESOLUTION

- a. To discuss and agree to make a RECOMMENDATION to Council that the updated Council Operations Risk Assessment for 2021-2022 be adopted**

The Clerk introduced the item and commented that updated sections were indicated by being in bold. Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands this was AGREED as a RECOMMENDATION for Full Council to adopt.

- b. To discuss and agree to make a RECOMMENDATION to Council that the BarclaysNet gateway be used to import BACS payments from Sage to enable Council to move away from making payments by cheque.**

Officers commented on the costs of cheques, associated postage and time impacts, also commenting that any system would maintain the security of payments as well as the audit trail as there would be the same (if not more) checks and sign-offs during the 4-step process. In answer to questions from Members it was also commented that for the first year, at least, a full paper back-up would be maintained, with an electronic archive being trialled. It was noted that there would be a written procedure/scheme for the authorisation process for BACS payments. Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands it was AGREED to make a RECOMMENDATION to Full Council to move payments to suppliers over to BACS processing from 1 April 2022.

- c. To discuss and agree to make a RECOMMENDATION to Council that the updated Health and Safety Policy be adopted.**

The updated Draft Health and Safety Policy was gone through line by line, with the following clarifications being made: -

“Aims of H&S at Work Policy” point 5 add after ‘...their work safely *and record as such.*’

“Arrangements and Responsibilities” point 6 after ‘major works (*Excavations and heavy plant used, but not exclusively restricted to this*)’.

"All employees, members... etc" Point 1 delete 'Cooperate' and replace with 'Comply'.

Following proposal, seconding and on a show of hands it was AGREED to make a RECOMMENDATION to Full Council to Adopt the updated policy.

d. To note/discuss the first draft budget for 2022-2023.

The first draft budget was noted although a Member had issues with the reserves as stated. The Clerk/RFO commented that these were still being sorted out. (Post meeting note: these have now been reconciled back to 2017 and to Box 7 on the Annual Reporting Form that is an audited statement of the reserves held at the year-end). It was also noted that the Granted To You was being proposed for February 2022, with the 2020 and 2021 funds being made available, so those sums would not be carried forwards in the new budget.

5. TO NOTE THE FINANCIAL REPORTS:

i. To note the quarterly accounts.

Key Differences – Budget Report

2nd Quarter: All receipts were as expected, with total receipts up £300 against budget. Within Expenditure Direct Costs are slightly up on budget due to the £11k of safety surfacing repairs that were mainly being refunded through s106 funds from CFH LAC (£33.6k received in early October), however, the overall Expenditure is £2k lower than budget.

Overheads were £21k below budget for the quarter, with the £120 of Office Repairs representing the servicing of the fire extinguishers.

Half Year Income was showing as promising for the remainder of the year being only £4.5k down against budget. Please remember that in Qtr 1 we were still under significant Covid restrictions and thus expenditure was minimal and income almost non-existent.

Expenditure was skewed by the payment of £71.3k to ACL for Valuation 17 and the release of Retention (£20k still due to CFPC from EBC for the grant retention) which were effectively held in our Reserves from the year end, so the real Net Profit should be taken without this deduction i.e. it correctly stands at £335,162.75 (£263k + £71.3k). Which would be expected having just received the 2nd instalment of the Precept on 30 September. Salaries were down on budget, mainly due to the lack of a caretaker and that the pay award for 2021-2022 (set nationally) had not been agreed to date – this would be backdated to 1 April 2021.

The ACL payments also made the expenditure appear above budget by £42.8k, but in fact it was below budget by £29k on the budgeted expenditure for the year.

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.

iii. To note that due to annual leave being taken by third parties a report/in person comment on the 31 March 2021 Balance Sheet reserves position isn't available – it is still being followed up.

The Clerk/RFO had undertaken an analysis of the Reserve movements during the Hiltingbury build and defects/release of retention period (from 2018 – 2021) that was very close to the Reserve figure in the annual return 2021.

A Member commented that the Balance Sheet figure for the Capital Finance Reserve (CFR) didn't make any sense in terms of double-entry bookkeeping and requested that the accountants be asked: 'whether we should have the CFR and the Fixed Assets on the Balance Sheet or not have the Fixed Assets stated and an explanatory

note about reserved funding to cover the capital repayments and interest costs guaranteed from future Precepts until the loan is fully repaid'.

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

Statement of Reserves.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date was confirmed as Monday 15 November 2021, in person at Fryern Pavilion.

That being all the business the meeting closed at 7.54p.m.

Chairman.....