

NOTES of the FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP MEETING held in the Town Council Chamber on **TUESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2018 at 18.30 hours.**

KAG Members: Andrew Barrett-Miles*
Richard Cherry
Graham Fairbairn - Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)
Pru Moore - Substitute
Colin Holden
John Merrill
Chris Thomas-Atkin – Chairman
Julian Thorpe*

Also Present: Steve Cridland
Janice Henwood

*Denotes absence

(start 18.30)

120. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Andrew Barrett-Miles

121. SUBSTITUTES

Pru Moore for Andrew Barrett-Miles

122. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

123. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

124. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Notes of the previous Finance Key Area Group meeting, dated 28 June 2018 (previously circulated to all Members), were approved by Members and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

125. LISTING OF PAYMENTS MADE

Members were informed a listing of payments made by the Town Council during the current financial year are held in a yellow folder within the cabinet above Members' blue boxes.

RESOLVED THAT:

To note the contents of the report.

126. **EXTERNAL AUDIT RESULTS FOR THE 2017/18 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Members received a report, as set out in agenda item 7, dated 20 November 2018, informing Members the recent external audit, carried out by Moore Stephens for the 2017/18 Financial year, did not raise any issues that needed to be brought to the attention of Members and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was signed-off without qualification.

Members congratulated the RFO and his team for another clean audit.

RESOLVED THAT:

To note the contents of the report.

127. **INTERNAL AUDIT – FIRST INTERIM 2018/19 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Members received a report, as set out in agenda item 8, dated 20 November 2018, advising Members of the outcome of the recent internal audit completed on 13 and 14 November 2018. The RFO was pleased to report that no items had arisen that needed to be drawn to the attention of Members, and the full report would be circulated to Members when received.

RESOLVED that:

To note the contents of the report.

128. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2018/19**

Members received a report, as set out in agenda item 9, dated 20 November 2018, updating Members with the latest financial forecast outturn for the 2018/19 financial year.

The report showed the Council would post an estimated surplus of just under £10k. The report highlighted the result included an improvement on income of £20k, the majority of which being made up of monies from the Janes Lane facility and increased success in hiring out council rooms to third parties, and a reduction in core costs of £55k made up of, in the main, changes to personnel levels and the inclusion of budget reductions identified and agreed at the June 2018 meeting.

During the ensuing discussion, Members noted the forecast included an amount of just over £65k being transferred to a Venue Revenue Support Fund as part of the funding plan to provide for a new modified performance venue. The forecast included, also, a ring fenced “credit” of £72k which related to the original venue proposal and would be credited back to residents in the 2019/20 Precept.

RESOLVED that:

To approve the contents of the report.

129. CHARGES FOR COUNCIL SERVICES 2019/20

Members received a report, as set out in agenda item 10, dated 20 November 2018, seeking Members' approval for an inflationary increase on various charges levied by the Town Council for the use of its facilities and services.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted the burial ground had circa 10 years capacity left dependant on the mix between ashes and coffin burials, and that funds were being set aside to develop a new burial ground.

In regard to the charges for the use of Council facilities and services, it was clarified the rates would vary depending on the status of the hirer and whether they were a partner organisation, charity/community group or commercial and, also, the level of facilities/services required.

RESOLVED that:

To approve an inflationary increase on the charges levied by the Town Council for the use of its facilities and services.

130. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2019/20

Members received a report, as set out in agenda item 11, dated 20 November 2018, for Members to consider the first formal draft of the Revenue Budget for 2019/20. Members noted this report updates and supersedes the report given to them at the June meeting where the creation of a Venue Revenue Support fund was agreed as part of the funding plan for the new modified venue project.

During the ensuing discussion, it was noted the draft budget included not only the removal of the budget line item for the original venue proposal but also the crediting back of, to the 2019/20 Precept, the money raised for the original venue plan of £72,385. The report highlighted these changes would have a substantial downward impact on the Precept and Band D rate for 2019/20 giving an overall deduction of some £10.86 when compared to the Band D rate for the 2018/19 year. It was noted, also, there would be an increase in the Band D rate for the financial year 2020/21 as the Precept charge normalised.

The discussion concluded that after taking into account these adjustments, the underlying movement in the Band D rate was a modest increase of circa £1.39 per annum (1.9%) and related, in the main, to the continued pressure on income as service contracts with West Sussex County Council came to an end. It was confirmed, also, income from Mid Sussex District Council, in regard to the Help Point and environmental improvements, were included in the overall budget calculations.

In conclusion, Members accepted this was the first formal draft budget for 2019/20 and was in lieu of the final budget to be presented at the January 2019 meeting.

RESOLVED that:

To note the contents of the report.

131. **EARMARKED RESERVES**

Members received a report, as set out in agenda item 12, dated 20 November 2018, giving a summary of the status and movements of the Town Council's Earmarked Reserves. The report was supported by a detailed listing, at appendix 3, of the all the Council's Earmarked Reserves.

During the ensuing discussion, clarification was given in regard to the funds in the Community Venue Fund. This had been set-up to fund, in the main, costs associated with the development of the now modified community and performance venue and would include costs such as architects, project management and planning fees.

It was clarified, also, the money in the Town Events Fund would have a modest surplus at the end of the financial year and would be topped-up at the beginning of the next financial year to ensure events within the town would continue.

RESOLVED that:

To note the contents of the report.

132. **BANK RECONCILIATION AND OTHER BALANCES**

Members received a report, as set out in agenda item 13, dated 20 November 2018, highlighting a recent bank reconciliation and providing current balances on the Town Council's various accounts.

It was noted the receipt for the second half of the Precept of £458k, had recently been received giving a current high balance, but this would, however, reduce during the next 5 months of financial year.

RESOLVED that:

To note the contents of the report.

133. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members were asked to check their diaries for the 16 or 17th January 2019 and to confirm their availability to the RFO accordingly.

Meeting ended 19.15