

Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

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**Minutes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Finance and Governance Committee

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 10 February 2021 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Zoom online meeting

**Present**

**Councillors**

Cllr Gray (C) Cllr Barrow Cllr Harris

Cllr Wheller Cllr Huckle (VC) Cllr Lambert

Cllr Legg Cllr Nickinson Cllr Wakeling

Cllr Taylor Cllr Hamilton Cllr Northam

**Officers**

Jane Biscombe (Town Clerk) Ian Milne (Business & Finance Manager)

Tony Hurley (Operations Manager) Tara Williams (Parks & Open Spaces Manager)

Charmaine Denny (Contracts & Facilities Officer) Ben Heath (Project Officer)

Niki Ayles (Democratic Officer)

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| F0151 | **Welcome by the Chair**  Cllr Gray welcomed those in attendance. |
| F0152 | **Apologies for Absence**  There were no apologies for absence. |
| F0153  F0154 | **Declarations of Interest**  There were no declarations of interest.  **Minutes of the last meeting**  **Resolved:**  Councillors voted unanimously to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2020 as a correct record. These will be signed at the earliest opportunity.  Cllr Gray confirmed that payroll budget discussions had been delayed until the launch of the new reporting for the Council, probably in the first quarter of the new financial year, and that the letter to Dorset Council (DC) had been sent and the response circulated. 3109 residents receive support within the Weymouth and Portland area, totalling £400k. |
| F0155 | **Councillors Questions**  Cllr Nickinson reported that, through Cllr Harris, the Assets Group has held a meeting and he was asked to report back to the Finance and Governance Committee. The group, along with Matt Ryan, has reviewed a very detailed list of assets and has agreed that the next step is to prioritise which are the most important assets to look at. This will be carried forward to the next meeting. Subsequent meetings will look at which assets are to be prioritised. |
| F0156 | **Public Comments and Questions**  The following question has been submitted by Susan Boyd:  “Which council power is Weymouth Town Council using to set up and deliver its new in-house catering services.”  Jane Biscombe provided the following response:  “The Council will be using the General Power of Competence as defined by the Localism Act 2011”. |
| F0157 | **Q3 Budget Monitoring Report**  Ian Milne introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation and added that a new format for information will be used in future to allow Members to have more of an overall view of the financial situation of the Council.  Ian Milne explained that income has to be recognised when invoices are raised and Officers have raised the majority of invoices for this time of year however he has made a judgement that the Council will only receive 75% of its income therefore 25% has been set aside as bad debt. If all income is received, this will be put in to the general fund to be used.  Cllr Nickinson was concerned that 25% is a very high provision of bad debt and asked what kind of recovery systems are in place, and on what basis it is felt that 25% of debts will be irrecoverable. Ian Milne responded that the areas included as bad debt are as a result of the Tenant Support Panel. If the Council provides support, it would need to make provision for those invoices not being paid. This is opposed to people being unwilling to pay their invoices.  Cllr Gray added that a Tenant Support Panel was convened to consider tenants on the beach who were not trading between April and June 2020. Each individual case is examined and the Council will offer support where it can, based on the financial information provided. Ian Milne confirmed that a confidential report will probably come back to this Committee to report any debts that Officers do not expect to be collected.  Cllr Taylor queried cost centre 100 In Appendix A and highlighted the estimated outrun of £7260, which is a large amount compared with what the original budget was. Tara Williams responded that the bait boxes used cost far more than was allocated and a wall had to be replaced at Rodwell Allotments. The maintenance budget has been increased to a more adequate budget going forward.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Huckle  Members voted unanimously in favour to:   1. Note the budget monitoring statement as at the end of the third quarter (Appendix A). 2. Note the earmarked reserves statement (Appendix B) 3. Note the virements listed within Appendix C. |
| F0158  F0159  F0160  F0161  F0162  F0163  F0164  F0165  F0166  F0167 | **Tumbledown Business Plan 2021 - 2026**  Clive Tuck, supported by Cllr Orrell, introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  Cllr Legg asked whether there would be the opportunity to keep sandbags somewhere at Tumbledown Farm for residents to access out of hours. Cllr Gray responded that he is aware that two alternative sites have been identified and Ben Heath will be asked to comment on this when he joins the meeting.  Clive Tuck reported that a newsletter has been circulated which involves the Friends of Tumbledown, a formal group. Work has also started on a marketing strategy. There is now a clear direction and, subject to approval of the Business Plan, quarterly newsletters containing updates can be progressed. Notices have also been added to the gates at Tumbledown outlining the intentions.  Cllr Northam will talk to Clive Tuck about including more information on the Tumbledown Facebook page, and to Katie Rickard (WTC Communications and Marketing Officer) about including more information on the WTC website or a link to the Tumbledown website from the WTC website.  Cllr Taylor queried the costs for utilities and highlighted that no inflationary increases have been included. Cllr Gray and Clive Tuck will look at this.  Cllr Orrell summarised that the Swallow Barn is up and running as a workshop. The remaining funds for this year will be used to improve access. The Business Plan will provide a firm foundation with which more buildings can be opened up and the most vulnerable groups in the town will be able to start work on the land.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Barrow Seconder: Cllr Lambert  Members voted unanimously in favour to recommend the Business Plan to Full Council for adoption, including any comments on the financial aspects of the plan.  **Grant Applications**  Cllr Gray explained that two grant applications had been tabled, with a third late addition which was circulated to Members prior to the meeting and has been available on the WTC website. Representatives from the three organisations were in attendance to answer any questions raised.  *The Old Town Hall*  Selwyn Williams attended the meeting. Members were very supportive of the hall and were keen to hear how it is used by the community.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Northam Seconder: Cllr Wakeling  Members voted unanimously in favour of awarding the recommended amount of £1,878.00  *St Mary’s Church*  Neil Biles, Town Centre Chaplain, explained that they are waiting to hear about their grant application to DC and in obtaining a partnership donation from the RSPB. Cllr Northam offered to provide details to St Mary’s of someone who may be able to help with regards to the filming element of the project.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Taylor Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members voted unanimously in favour of awarding the recommended amount of £2,000.00.  *Friends of The Marsh*  Cllr Legg highlighted that WTC is being asked to provide over 90% of the funding and asked whether other means of funding have been considered, such as the Friends of The Marsh Group themselves, or fund raising by the young people who wish to use the facility.  Cllr Fuhrmann responded that it is not currently possible to engage young people in fund raising due to the current pandemic. Mike Byatt, Friends of The Marsh, added that the group has limited funds and has been affected by Covid-19. It has aspirations to do other things with the limited funds that it has.  Concerns were raised regarding the lack of communication from the Friends of The Marsh group with its members. Cllr Gray requested that this be picked up as a membership issue outside of this meeting.  Cllr Harris asked what funding was left in The Marsh Action Plan that could be used to support this project, and wondered whether left over funding from the S106 for Curtis Fields could be used for this project as well as for what is planned for it to be spent on. Tony Hurley responded that in terms of the funding for The Marsh that came from the Curtis Fields development, it is specific in terms of the range of facilities to be provided, such as the skate park and pump track. He is not aware of any unallocated funding. Other than the S106 money, there was no other funding to support the implementation of The Marsh Master Plan.  Action – Tara Williams to be asked to look at whether there is any funding left and whether it could be used.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Wheller Seconder: Cllr Barrow  Members voted by a majority of 10 in favour, with 2 abstentions, to award the requested amount of £2,000.   1. **Corporate Plan**   Jane Biscombe introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation and thanked members who had supported her in formulating the Corporate Plan. The service plans and KPIs will be coming to Members in early Summer therefore by mid-August everything should be in place and regularly monitored. However, if she can bring this forward then she will.  In response to concerns form Cllr Harris, Jane Biscombe confirmed that Tara Williams is working with Members and Officers with regards to the nursery proposal. The production of the plan does not mean that existing planning and development will be put on hold. Jane Biscombe will talk to Tara Williams this week to ascertain what timescales she is working to and whether it can be brought forward to June or July.  Cllr Gray felt that in terms of KPIs and the department action plans, it would be beneficial to populate them at the end of the first quarter in order that fully populated plans with KPIs are being looked at in June and the first three months can be reviewed. Jane Biscombe will discuss this with SMT in order to ascertain what can be brought forward.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Barrow Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members voted unanimously in favour to:   1. Agree to recommendation the plan to Full Council for adoption (Appendix E). 2. Agree the format of the Key Objectives table (Appendix F).   The  **Land off Pinemoor Close/Brackendown Avenue**  Charmaine Denny introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation and added that there is a definite need for these additional 7 allotment plots in the east of Weymouth. There are 15 people on the waiting list who live in either Littlemoor or Preston. The current footpaths will remain in place and members of the public will still be able to access them from the top of Pinemoor Close.  Cllr Northam felt that here was more DC owned land off of Littlemoor Road which may be suitable. Cllr Gray requested that Cllr Northam talk to Tara Williams regarding identifying a further suitable site within DC’s ownership to ask whether they would consider transferring it to WTC.  Jane Biscombe confirmed that discussions are ongoing regarding ensuring that future press releases and timescales work for all parties concerned.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members voted unanimously in favour of recommending the transfer of Land off Pinemoor Close Brackendown Avenue as detailed in the report and in accordance with the heads of terms set out in confidential Appendix H to Full Council.  **Risk Management**  Ian Milne introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr Gray  Members voted unanimously in favour to agree the risk register (Appendix I) for approval at Full Council on 24 February 2021.  **Retention and Disposal Policy and Schedule**  Ian Milne introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. Jane Biscombe confirmed that, whilst the new beach office is under the ownership of WTC, the CCTV systems are operated by DC and will fall under their Retention and Disposal Policy. Tony Hurley to request that DC ensures that legal and required CCTV signage is up to date.  Cllr Northam asked how he can access the minutes from WPBC meetings. Jane Biscombe advised she believes that the back catalogue of WPBC meetings is hosted on the DC website. Officers will be able to assist Cllr Northam.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr Lambert  Members voted unanimously in favour of recommending the Retention Policy and Schedule (Appendix J) to Full Council for adoption.  **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Policy**  Jane Biscombe introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Northam Seconder: Cllr Huckle  Members voted unanimously in favour of recommending the CIL Allocation Policy (Appendix K) to Full Council for adoption.  **Carbon Footprint – decarbonisation briefing and draft action plan**  Cllr Harris introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation.  Cllr Nickinson highlighted that home working for staff has been fairly embedded for the last year and, moving forward, something that came out of the asset review is use of the town council offices. Cllr Nickinson asked whether more firm proposals should be made regarding how the Council goes forward in terms of home working. This would link into the asset review in terms of what the Council could do with the Council Offices. He would also like to know what will be done longer term regarding Council meetings and the green agenda.  Jane Biscombe responded that Members will be aware that the HR Committee has approved a home working policy which gives flexibility to staff to work from home for two days a week. However, this could be more if working on a specific piece of work. However, there are also benefits to working in the office and it needs to be acknowledged that, for some people, home is not a quiet, safe place to be in. SMT have been discussing some of the options and it is hoped that this will be brought to Full Council in the near future. There is also a need to understand DC’s plans as they are part of the Commercial Road offices.  With regards to Council meetings, the TAG group has held some initial discussions. However, the Council is waiting for the government to decide what the legislation is regarding this. The current legislation runs until 7th May, after which virtual meetings will no longer be legal in terms of Full Council and Committees. Jane Biscombe is talking to NALC and the SLCC to push the government to allow Councils to retain flexibility. Virtual meetings are working well, and more people have been watching. The Council’s carbon footprint has also dropped as the public, Members and Officers are not having to drive to meetings. The amount of paper used has also reduced significantly.  Cllr Gray proposed that recommendation C be amended to read:  “requests that a funding increase of up to £50,000 be considered to the Clean and Green operational budget when considering the council’s 2020-21 end of year financial position and allocations to earmarked reserves to progress decarbonisation mitigation actions as set out in the action plan subject to future PIDs to Full Council, and to separate out Tumbledown to a separate operational budget.”  Members then voted on the amendment.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Gray Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members voted unanimously in favour of the amendment detailed above.  Members then voted on the substantive recommendations.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Lambert  Member voted unanimously in favour to:   1. Agree to endorse the developing Decarbonisation Action Plan and the mitigation actions within it required to reduce the Councils Carbon Footprint. 2. recommend the adoption of the Decarbonisation Action Plan to Full Council. 3. request that a funding increase of up to £50,000 be considered to the Clean and Green operational budget when considering the council’s 2020-21 end of year financial position and allocations to earmarked reserves to progress decarbonisation mitigation actions as set out in the action plan subject to future PIDs to Full Council, and to separate out Tumbledown to a separate operational budget.   **Project Initiation Document – Solar PV**  Cllr Harris, supported by Ben Heath, introduced the item as detailed in the agenda documentation. As part of the PID, Ben Heath was asked to ensure that the Committee receives a report regarding what the solar panelling on the toilets is generating for the Council, and explore more efficient methods of heating water as well as other means of generating electricity, such as through wind power. Ben Heath will also provide details of the pay-back period for solar panels.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Northam  Member voted unanimously in favour to agree to the production of a Project Plan to explore options for the delivery of Solar PV  **Information Items**  **Catering Services Mobilisation Update:**  Charmaine Denny provided an update, as detailed in the agenda documentation.  **Actions from last meeting:**  Cllr Gray attended a government town centre webinar earlier today which discussed how to regenerate high streets. However, he needs to think about what was said and what proposals might be brought forward in terms of Weymouth.  **Forward Plan:**  Cllr Gray reported that at the end of the financial year the Council will probably have a significant underspend and a small Sub-Committee will propose to the Finance and Governance Committee how that is allocated and spent. It was agreed that Cllr Gray, Cllr Lambert, Cllr Northam and Cllr Huckle will sit on this Sub-Committee.  Ben Heath will be asked to contact Cllr Legg regarding sandbag sites and will liaise with DC regarding implementation dates.  The meeting closed at 21.22 pm |