

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which was held at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy on Monday 6 September 2021 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, P Blaine, W Jackson, J Hewitt, R Lock, C Osborne (Chair), M Pettitt and P Sharman.

In attendance: Cllrs A Gibson and Mr C Robson (Town Clerk)

Actions

1 Apologies for absence (48-2021/22)

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Hill and Scott.

2 Declarations of interest (49-2021/22)

None.

3 Minutes of previous meeting (50-2021/22)

It was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 26 July 2021 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Public Participation Session (51-2021/22)

There were no questions from members of the public.

5 Financial Reports (52-2021/22)

i) Members considered a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for July 2021. The Chairman took Members through the report page by page.

A Member asked about where funds committed to the skate park project were held, as only £7,000 showed on the balance sheet. The Clerk explained the £34,000 was committed from Section 106 which was held by CBC and could be applied for once the project was completed. Another £25,000 was held by CBC Community Asset Fund and a further £3,115 by the PCC. Again, these funds will be claimed once the project is complete.

A Member asked why there was an Equipment/Vehicle maintenance budget under Democratic Services. The Clerk explained that this was for any potential work needed to the mayor's chain, Council pictures or Mayor's boards in the Chamber. 'Equipment/Vehicle' is a standard title for budget code 4042, no matter which cost centre it sits under.

It was agreed to note the balance sheet and financial reports.

ii) Members received a budget overview report for July 2021. The Chairman took Members through the report page by page.

Sandy Town Council

It was agreed to note the report.

iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the list of July 2021 payments.

iv) It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair of Policy, Finance and Resources check and approve the bank reconciliations and statements.

Cllr
Osborne

6 Sandy Youth Voice (53-2021/22)

Members considered a recommendation from the Community Services & Environment Committee on use of the Council Chamber by CBC and Sandy Youth Voice. A Member spoke in favour of the recommendation, adding that it would support the Council's Youth Engagement Policy.

RESOLVED that the Sandy Youth Voice group be given free use of the Council Chamber on a fortnightly basis and that the Council set up a rota of volunteer Councillors to open/close the office and facilitate the meetings, including some engagement with the group.

The Clerk asked that any Member wishing to volunteer for the rota to open and close let him know. A date for a first meeting had not yet been confirmed.

Cllrs

7 Faulty Street Light Columns (54-2021/22)

Members received and considered costs for the repair of faulty streetlights and the removal of redundant streetlight columns at Sunderland Road recreation ground. The Clerk commented that Members may want to consider adding a lantern to one of the redundant poles as it would help with evening CCTV coverage of the car park/path area. The matter had been brought forward again at this time as the lighting engineer was to be on site fixing some lights and provided a cost for the removal of the unused poles.

A Member explained that a previous council had disconnected six lanterns as when they were all on, the area was too bright. Members commented that the redundant posts looked cluttered and at least four should be removed, opening up the space. The Council had previously agreed to look at the removal of the posts but deferred the matter due to costs.

Other Members were concerned that it was too premature to remove all the posts, which might be needed in the future as part of the Jenkins Leisure proposal. This should be considered again when there is more clarity on the project.

Sandy Town Council

Another Member commented that lighting and security in the area is poor and any additional lanterns that could be added to the posts would be welcome.

RESOLVED to leave the unused streetlight posts at Sunderland Road recreation ground in place at this time and to have a lantern installed on the unused post nearest the carpark/entrance path.

Town Clerk

8 Bedford Road Pavilion Roof (55-2021/22)

Members received and considered a report on repair work needed to the Bedford Road Pavilion roof. The Chairman and Mayor did have delegated authority to approve the work, but felt that the quote was quite high and as such the matter should come to committee for consideration. Further quotes were still hoped for. Members agreed that the work should be done as soon as possible and before winter and the wetter weather.

RESOLVED to approve the required work to the Bedford Road pavilion roof as recommended at a cost no higher than £650.

Town Clerk

9 2022/23 Budget Review (56-2021/22)

Members started the 2022/23 budget review and setting process by reviewing the Council's revenue budget. The Chairman reminded Members that this was the first stage in the process. The Chairman took the committee through each page of the budget report.

Members commented as follows:

Page 1 - It was noted the salary budget was subject to percentage increases still to be advised by the government.

Page 3 – 402-4009 – Travel and Subsistence – Based on previous years expenditure it was agreed to reduce the budget by £50.

General Rates – A Member commented that the 1.5% allowance for general rates seemed low. It was agreed to note general rates increases at this stage and review again as the budget setting process progressed.

Page 5 - A Member asked whether printing costs could be reduced by having the Council look at more paperless options for agendas and minutes. This would be a greener option and could provide cost savings. A Member commented that they would be concerned about the costs involved to individual councillors in printing off agendas. At present Members can request to only have electronic copies if they so wish. The Chairman commented that he didn't feel printing costs were high for a council of this size. It was noted that some Councils are

Sandy Town Council

going paperless and buying tablets at a one off capital cost for Councillors to use to view agendas during meetings. A Member asked if this could be considered further by the Full Council at some point in the future.

Page 5 – 402-4023 – Stationery – Based on current year estimates, it was agreed to lower the budget to £700.

Page 6 – 402 4040 – Equipment Purchases – Members felt this budget may be high based on previous expenditure. The Clerk stated that equipment was needed and the budget was contingency. The Clerk was asked to look at any planned expenditure for 2022/23.

Page 7 – 402-4051 – Bank Charges – Members asked whether the Council should look to make more BACS payments to reduce cheque processing payments. The Clerk explained that this was not possible with the current banking set up and the Council's Standing Orders (S.O). This is because the Council's S.O's state that payments require three signatures and the online banking only permits two (Clerk and Admin Team Leader). Other banks do offer options to allow multiple signatories to approve payments online. It was agreed the PFR committee would look at the banking arrangements and moving to greater online banking as part of its Action Plan.

A Member asked why there were budget codes for the accountant and internal and external auditors. The Clerk explained that these were three separate processes and services for which the Council paid. The accountant was for the council's monthly and annual account processing and support, while the internal auditor was a process the Council must undertake twice a year and the external audit once a year.

Page 7 – 402-4057 – Agreed to increase the recommended 2022/23 budget by a further £1,000 to £4,500 to cover additional legal costs that may be incurred on the Jenkins Leisure proposal.

Page 8 – 402-1003 - Tourism Income – Agreed to increase budget by £100 to reflect potential income from Saffords trips.

Page 10 - 403-4036 – Property Maintenance and Security – Agreed to lower budget to £1,400 based on previous years expenditure and the lower maintenance costs anticipated as a result of the new depot building.

Members queried whether budgets for fuel and vehicle maintenance could be lowered if the Council was to buy a new electric vehicle. It was agreed it was too early to consider this as a proposal on a new vehicle

Sandy Town Council

needed to come forward.

Page 15 – 408-4100 – Agreed to reduce CCTV budget by a further £500 to £3,000. A Member asked if this budget could be kept in place and used to increase CCTV coverage. It was noted that the budget was for maintenance and repair and new cameras would come from capital.

A Member asked that the Council review its policy for car park passes, especially given the potential build of more properties in the Town Centre without parking. It was suggested there should be an annual, not a one off, charge. It was agreed that this could be looked at during the review of the scale of charges.

Town Clerk/
PFR

Page 24 – 602-4033 - Annual Report and Newsletter – It was queried whether the Bulletin was the best use of the Council’s funds, as there were concerns it was not getting delivered to every house. Agreed that the CSE committee would consider this further.

CSE

10 Event Support Grant Application Form (57-2021/22)

Members considered a second draft of a proposed form for applicants applying to the Town Council for community event grant funding.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the proposed Event Support Grant Form.

Admin

11 Co-option Policy (58-2021/22)

Members reviewed the Council’s adopted Co-option Policy and considered the amendments highlighted. The Policy had previously been amended to reflect the co-option process when carried out at a virtual (zoom) meeting of the Council. As the COVID19 regulations have now changed to allow Council meetings to return to face to face, it was suggested the policy be amended to reflect this.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Co-option policy with the proposed amendments.

Admin

12 Social Media Policy (59-2021/22)

Members reviewed the amendments to the Council’s Social Media Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the Council’s Social Media Policy with the addition of the Sandy Skatepark Project Facebook page.

Admin

13 Cemetery (60-2021/22)

Members received notes from meetings of the cemetery working group. The Chairman commented that while he agreed with a lot of the points made in the notes about the opening of the car park, he had been asked about what was happening by the public and the Council needed

Sandy Town Council

to advise the public accordingly.

Members agreed that due to the work still required and the need to ascertain how and when the car park would be opened and managed (ie to stop use of parking by walkers or commuters, how cars locked in will be dealt with etc) the Council should continue to open the car park and toilets up to support funerals, only at this time.

Agreed that the Mayor and Clerk would work on messaging to be included in a news release, on the Council website and on notices at the cemetery to advise the public on the current status of the car park.

Town
Clerk/
Mayor

14 Chairman's Items (61-2021/22)

There were no Chairman's items.

15 Date of Next Meeting (62-2021/22)

It was noted that the next Policy, Finance and Resources Committee meeting will be on Monday 18th October 2021.