

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which was held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 27 March 2017 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, T Cole, W Jackson, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Scott (Chairman) D Sharman and P Sharman.

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Town Clerk), Mr Peter Davis (Ivel Sprinter) Mr Chris Page (Sandy Fire Cadets), Mr David Stoppard (CAB), Mr Andrew Havergale, Mr John Bray (Horticultural Association), Mr Douglas Deards (The Need Project), Mr Simon Ford (Mid Beds Tigers)

Actions

1 Apologies for absence (110-2016/17)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Hill.

2 Declarations of interest (111-2016/17)

- i) Declarable pecuniary interests – None
- ii) Non pecuniary interests – Cllr Jackson declared an interest in agenda item 7, III, as member of the Horticultural Association. Cllr Aldis declared an interest in agenda item 7, III, as a Vice President of the Horticultural Association.

3 Public Participation Session (112-2016/17)

There were no questions received from members of the public.

4 Minutes of previous meeting (113-2016/17)

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 13 February 2017 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Financial Reports (114-2016/17)

- i) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to 31st December 2016 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members scrutinised the financial report and made the following comments:

A Member asked that the text of the document be made bigger, as it is difficult to read. The Clerk explained that the accounts program produces the report in a fixed size, but he would look to see what could be done.

Sandy Town Council

A Member queried the lower than expected Christmas Lights Event income. The Clerk informed the committee that a report on the matter would be coming to Full Council on 10th April 2017.

A Member asked about the overspend on service charges. The Clerk explained that this was due to an ongoing PHS contract, but that it had been renegotiated to reduce costs by 70%. Cost savings will be seen in the next financial year.

A Member queried overspends in electricity and water budget lines. It was requested that the Clerk establish the reasons for overspend and email this to committee members.

Admin

The Clerk informed the committee that the Cricket Square budget appeared overspent, but that this was not the case. Section 106 money was due to be received to offset the costs of refurbishment work to the pitch, this would result in an underspend. The sc106 funds were received in February 2017 and will show in the next set of statements.

RESOLVED to note and approve the report.

ii) Members received and reviewed a budget overview report.

RESOLVED to receive and note the report.

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

RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.

iv) Bank reconciliations and statements.

RESOLVED that Cllr Scott scrutinise the bank reconciliations and statements and sign these as approved at the end of the meeting.

Cllr Scott

6 Ivel Sprinter (115-2016/17)

Mr Peter Davis, publicity manager for the Ivel Sprinter, spoke on behalf of the application. The Ivel Sprinter has requested £550 to cover the costs of installing 6 timetable cases along the Ivel Sprinter route. The cases will be located in areas of the route that currently lack any information. The cases will not be designated bus stops, as the service is a 'hail to ride'. The proposed purpose is to attract people that don't know about the service. The service has worked with CBC to get timetables placed in all existing cases, where space permits.

Sandy Town Council

A Member pointed out that there were a number of grant applications and that if all were to be awarded in full the Council's grant budget would be severely depleted. This will be something the Council will need to re-visit when looking at 2018/19 budgets.

A Member queried the locations as some appeared to overlap. A Member suggested a leaflet drop would be more beneficial and cost effective.

A Member commented that CBC were the area's public transport providers and as such, should be contributing to any needed infrastructure. Many costs are getting pushed down to Town Council level.

A Member commented that the Ivel Sprinter's publicity was good, especially on social media. As such the added benefit of having 6 timetable cases was questioned.

It was Proposed and Seconded that a grant of £200 be awarded to meet some of the costs of the proposed cases. The proposal was lost 4-3.

It was Proposed and Seconded that at this stage no grant be awarded to the Ivel Sprinter. A recorded vote was requested.

For: Cllrs T Cole, M Pettitt, C Osborne, D Sharman, P Sharman
Against: Cllrs N Aldis, P Blaine, W Jackson

RESOLVED that at this stage no grant award will be made to the Ivel Sprinter.

The chairman thanked Mr Davis for attending the meeting.

7 Grant Applications (116-2016/17)

The Chair informed the meeting that he would be taking item II first, as the applicant was on duty with the fire service and may need to leave the meeting.

A member asked for clarification on the level of funding available for grants. The Chair confirmed that there was £91 in the current year's budget and £3,000 within the 2017/18 budget, due to start on 1st April. There is also a £2,000 events budget which can be used to support community events in Sandy.

Sandy Town Council

Sandy Fire Cadet Unit

Mr Chris Page spoke on behalf of the application. The Fire Cadets is seeing increasing numbers of young people join its ranks and the service continues to play a big part in the Sandy community, including assisting at events such as the Sandy Carnival. The application stated that money for uniforms and PPE had been cut and the grant application was to help gap the funding cut.

A member questioned what the proposed gazebo and chairs would be used for. Mr Page said these would be used at events, such as the Sandy carnival, to provide a base for the cadets to display what they do, attract new members and fundraise. Members commented that the Council owned gazebos which it would be happy to lend.

A member asked about the Duke of Edinburgh award and the costs involved. Mr Page confirmed that the fire service covers the costs involved in cadets completing DoE.

Members agreed that the cadets do a good job and are a valued group within the town. It was Proposed and Seconded that a grant of £500 be awarded.

RESOLVED to award a grant of £500 from the 2017/18 grants budget to the Sandy Fire Cadet Unit.

Admin

Citizens Advice Bureau Mid Bedfordshire

Mr David Stoppard spoke on behalf of the application. The average number of people helped by a CAB office is 170 a week and all work carried out by CAB is funded by grants. 10% of the people helped on a weekly basis by the Mid Bedfordshire CAB are from Sandy. The Mid Bedfordshire service has 3 paid employees and over 50 volunteers.

It costs £18,000 a year to run the outreach programme for which grant funding is being sought. The level to which the programme is run is based on the funding received. At present the project is run for 15 hours a week and this will reduce if funds aren't found.

A Member asked how many people of the 170 who used CAB on a weekly basis benefited as a result. The applicant informed the committee that he would hope 100% of people would benefit, but that this may be by advice rather than receiving money.

A Member noted that 14 local councils had awarded grants and that the average amount awarded was £250. It was Proposed and

Sandy Town Council

Seconded that a grant of £250 be awarded from the 2017/18 grants budget.

RESOLVED to award a grant of £250 from the 2017/18 grants budget to the Citizens Advice Bureau Mid Bedfordshire.

Admin

Sandy and District Horticultural Association

Mr Andrew Havergale spoke on behalf of the application. In the 2016/17 financial year, the Association applied for, and received, a grant of £400 from the Town Council. This grant was gratefully received and covered the cost of renting the event venue. The 2016/17 event was the Show's 50th year and was a great success, both in terms of exhibitors and visitors. The Association wishes to build on the previous success of the event and to encourage more families to attend and stay longer. To do this, they need to introduce more entertainment into the day and as such are asking for a grant of £500 to go towards increasing the entertainment offered at the event.

It was Proposed and Seconded that a grant of £500 be awarded from the Council's 2017/18 Events Support budget.

The Chairman abstained from voting on this item.

RESOLVED to award £500 from the 2017/18 events budget to support the Sandy Horticultural Show.

Admin

Autism Bedfordshire

The Chair informed Members that the organisation had not been able to send a representative to speak on behalf of the application.

A Member noted that the service the charity offered was highly beneficial and important. It was proposed and seconded that a grant of £200 be awarded. That £91 of the grant come from the remaining 2016/17 budget and the remaining come from the 2017/18 budget.

RESOLVED to award £200 to Autism Bedfordshire.

Admin

The Need Project Central Bedfordshire

Mr Douglas Deards spoke on behalf of the application. The Need Project provides food for individuals and families who may be in difficult circumstances and require assistance. The service is run across the whole of Central Bedfordshire. As well as food, the charity

Sandy Town Council

helps provide furniture and clothes. In Sandy, up to 13 families a week receive help from the project. Often families are left struggling due to delays in receiving benefits and the project can help provide food in those circumstances. Areas of Sandy are deprived and do need assistance.

The Need Project also runs 'project 17' which provides 17 bedrooms for young and vulnerable people who may find themselves without accommodation. As well as providing a temporary bed the project also provides a food parcel, mainly made up of dried goods.

The charity employs a driver and leases a van as a way to distribute food and furniture. Due to the need for the services that project leader's days have been increased from 3 days a week to 5.

The project originally received funding from Central Bedfordshire Council and government funding, however in recent years this funding has ceased and the charity relies on churches, individual donations and grant funding.

A Member commented that the requested £1,000 donation was unrealistic for Sandy to support at this early stage in the year. It was Proposed and Seconded that a grant of £500 be made out of the 2017/18 grants budget.

RESOLVED to award £500 to the Need Project Central Bedfordshire

Admin

Cllr M Pettitt left the meeting following the completion of Agenda Item 7.

8 Section 106 Application (117 -2016/17)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on a request from the Mid Bed Tigers for support in making a section 106 application to Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC). The Clerk had been working with the Mid Bed Tigers to establish if a Section 106 application would be appropriate. CBC stated that they would want to see Town Council support for the proposal if it were to move forward.

Mr Simon Ford, representing the Mid Bed Tigers, was present at the meeting.

The Mid Bed Tigers are asking for 50% funding towards the cost of purchasing a wooden hut to use as a hub to raise money and boost the social element of match days. Funding is also requested for a set of nets.

Sandy Town Council

Members noted that it was good to see the club were getting support from volunteers and organisations. In many ways, the club was helping itself and the Council should support where it could.

It was Proposed and Seconded that the Council support an application for Section 106 funding to Central Bedfordshire Council.

A Member asked about the location of the hut, noting that the school grounds were attractive. Mr Ford informed Members that an area had been agreed with the school and this would be directly behind the main building.

The Clerk asked what the time periods would be for completion of the hut. Mr Ford informed the committee that they would like the hut completed for August 2017.

RESOLVED that the Town Council support the Mid Beds Tigers application to Central Bedfordshire Council for Section 106 grant funding.

Town Clerk

9 Action List (118 -2016/17)

Members received an action list from the Town Clerk.

Members noted that the PHS contract had been renegotiated to save 70% on the cost of providing and emptying hygiene bins.

The Clerk informed Members that due to the required gradient and dimensions of a disabled ramp it was proving difficult to incorporate a ramp into the War Memorial. Any work carried out will need the approval of Historic England. The Clerk will continue to investigate the matter and bring back a definite answer to the committee.

Town Clerk

It was noted that amended memorial and complaints policies would come to the next committee meeting for approval.

10 Streetlight Contractor (119 -2016/17)

Members received and considered a report from the Clerk and Administration Team Leader on renewal of the Council's streetlight maintenance contract.

The Clerk informed Members that two quotes had been received and that both company A and B would be able to carry out the maintenance contract to a required standard. The recommendation within the report was based on an annual fixed price cost and lower unit costs for replacement/damaged units. Company A is able to agree a fixed price cost over 6 years.

Sandy Town Council

It was Proposed and Seconded that the Clerk's recommendation that Company A be appointed on a six-year contract be agreed.

RESOLVED to appoint company A on a 6 year, fixed price, maintenance contract for Town Council owned streetlights.

Admin

11 Photocopier/Printer Contract (120-2016/17)

Members received a report and quotes from the Town Clerk and Admin Team Leader for the renewal of the Council's photocopier/printer contract.

The Clerk explained that all printers quoted would be able to provide the Council with the service needed. The recommendation within was based on lower running costs, a lower estimated annual cost, quick call out times and remote monitoring and ordering of consumables. All quoted contracts run over a five year period.

RESOLVED to accepted Company B's quote for a Konica Minolta C258 copier on a five year contract.

Admin

12 Community Benefit Payment Receipt (121 -2016/17)

Members noted that a community benefit payment of £7,000 had been received from the solar farm which lies within the parish boundaries.

RESOLVED that the £7,000 community benefit receipt be carried forward into the 2017/18 financial year and be held in earmarked reserves for use on projects that provide a benefit to Sandy and its residents.

Town Clerk

13 Recruitment Policy (122 -2016/17)

Members received and reviewed a proposed Recruitment Policy from the Human Resources Committee.

RESOLVED that the Recruitment Policy be adopted by the Council.

14 Chairman's Items (123-2016/17)

There were no Chairman's Items.

15 Date of next meeting (124-2016/17)

It was noted that the date of the next committee meeting will be 8 May 2017.