

FINANCE, BUDGET & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

REPORT (Minutes) of the meeting of the Finance, Budget & Oversight Committee, held at the Fleur de Lys Council Chambers, Market Street, Hailsham on Wednesday 18th January 2012 at 7.30 p.m.

Prior to commencement of formal business, a period of not more than 15 minutes was assigned for the purpose of permitting members of the public to address the Committee or ask questions (on matters relevant to the responsibilities under the direction of this committee).

FBO/11/8/
66.1 **Present:** J.L. Blake, N.A. Collinson, N.S. Coltman (Chairman), R.T. Grocock (Vice- Chairman), G.G. Rowe, C. Triandafyllou & A. Williams

67.1 **Officers Present:** Mr. J Harrison (Town Clerk), Mr. M. Cairn (Deputy Town Clerk) & Mrs M Haggar (Finance Officer)

68.1 **Apologies For Absence:** Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor J.E. Bentley-Astor.

Declarations of Interest

69.1 None presented.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

70.1 **RESOLVED** to note that the Minutes and Reports of the Meeting of the Finance, Budget & Oversight Committee (Ref: FBO/11/6/40-65) held on the 9th November 2011 were confirmed as being a correct record and adopted by the Town Council at a meeting held on 16th November 2011.

Matters Arising

71.1 Minute Reference FBO/11/6/49.2 Urban Grass Cutting.
Discussion ensued on the standard of cuts and monitoring of the contract. It was proposed that all councillors are given the detailed maps for their wards and they provide feedback to officers on the standard of the cuts. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to investigate this.

71.2 Minute Reference FBO/11/6/49.3 Street Lights.
The Chairman proposed that this item be considered later on the agenda at Agenda Item 4.5, the Committee agreed to the proposal.

71.3 Minute Reference FBO/11/6/53.2 Steam Cleaning Service.
This item to be considered under Agenda Item 4.3 a.

71.4 The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked Micelle Haggar for her work in producing the reports.

Accounts and Audit

Periodic Statements and Committee Expenditure

- 72.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the Fund Summary as at 31st December 2011, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/72A to these minutes.
- 73.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the Summary of Nett Expenditure as at 31st December 2011, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/73A to these minutes.
- 74.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the List of uncleared cheques as at 31st December 2012, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/74A to these minutes.
- 74.2 Councillor Blake asked if the Town Clerk could be given the authority to sign cheques that were valued under £100, as these represented a majority of payments and could be more efficient for the Council.
Discussion ensued with respect to the legal status of this and the principal of not having at least one councillor to sign off payments.
- 74.3 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Finance Officer investigate this and report back to the next meeting of the Finance & Budget Oversight Committee.
- 75.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the List of payments previously certified by a member of the cheque signatory panel amounting to £63,113.68 for payments made during October 2011, £91,950.00 for payments made during November 2011, and £55,100.08 for payments during December 2011, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/75A to these minutes
- 76.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt The summary of Councils income and expenditure as at 31st December 2012, compared against budget, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/76A to these minutes.
- 76.2 Councillor J. Blake asked for details of how the balance of the underspent budget would be used before the year-end, as only 52% had been spent in the first three quarters of the year?
The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed he would discuss this with the Finance Officer and report back to the Committee as appropriate.

Internal Audit's Report and Committee Chairman's Verification

- 77.1 **RESOLVED** to note and adopt the Internal Auditor's report dated 10th January 2012, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/77A to these minutes.
- 78.1 **RESOLVED** to note the Chairman's (FBO) inspection, reconciliation and certification of Council's Income, Expenditure and Bank Balances for the quarter ended 31st December 2012 as circulated with the Agenda; see Appendix FBO/11/8/72A to these minutes.

End of Quarter Balance Statements

- 79.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the end of quarter balance statements in respect of the Steam Cleaning Service, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/79A to these minutes.
- 79.2 Councillor N. Coltman asked if there was any cost of “free” work (highway cleansing, graffiti removal etc) undertaken within the town for the period of the report.
The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that there should have been £80 noted against the “Community Usage” item, and apologised for this being omitted from the report.
- 80.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the end of quarter balance statements in respect of the Minibus Service, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/80A to these minutes.
- 80.2 Councillor N. Coltman asked if there was any Town Council usage that should be detailed on the report.
The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the Square Café has used the minibus and he would arrange for the “cost” of this to be included in future reports.
- 80.3 **Hire Charges**
Discussion ensued on the hire rates for the use of the minibus. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that they were lower than a commercial equivalent, but had not been reviewed for at least two years.
- 80.4 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the minibus hire charges are reviewed and a report presented to the next meeting of the Finance & Budget Oversight Committee.
- 81.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the end of quarter balance statements in respect of the Youth Facilities, as circulated with the Agenda and as Appendix FBO/11/8/81 to these minutes.
- 81.2 Councillors requested that the title of the Youth Facilities statement should include the Square Café to give additional clarity. The Finance Officer to amend future reports.
- 82.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the end of quarter balance statements in respect of the Hailsham In Bloom Committee, as circulated with the Agenda, and as Appendix FBO/11/8/82A to these minutes.

Free Resource Payments

- 83.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to note and adopt the expenditure on the Remembrance Day wreath.

Street Lighting

- 84.1 Councillor Triandafyllou provided details of a meeting with East Sussex County Council in respect of a project to move to part night street lights (lights would turn off between midnight and 5.00am approx). Trial projects in Heathfield and

Uckfield had been completed in the last year and East Sussex County Council is looking to extend this across the whole county over the next few years.

The cost to change each light is £25 including materials and fitting for the Hailsham Town Council's Lights. If the Town Council decided to change all of its 530 lights this would cost a total of £13,250. The pay back on energy cost is around 46% per annum, and it would therefore take just over two years to realise an overall saving. The other advantage is a reduction in energy consumption and the carbon footprint of the Council.

84.2 **RESOLVED** to recommend that subject to public, police and emergency services views and agreeing the funding the Council should pursue this project with East Sussex County Council.

85.1 **Fraudulent access/ 'hacking' into HTC telephone system**

The Town Clerk reported that the Council's telephone system had been hacked into on 12 January 2012. The cost of calls was estimated to be between £6,000 and £7,500 and the Council's telephone provider has stated that is the responsibility of the Council to pay for these calls.

Discussion ensued on the responsibilities and potential negligence of the Council's telephone provider.

The Town Clerk confirmed he will provide more details to the Council Meeting to be held on 25th January, including the contract and insurance positions actual cost and full report of the incident if known.

Budget for 2012/2013

86.1 The Chairman highlighted a number of changes that had been incorporated into the budget over the past few months. He stated that the overall budget/precept would result in a nil increase in the cost per household of £114.69 for a Band D property.

86.2 Concessionary Rail Refunds were identified as a service that needed to be reviewed as part of the 2013/2014 budget setting process.

86.3 The issue of the vacant premises at 4 Market Square was also highlighted and it was agreed that the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk would provide a report on the potential uses to the Council meeting in February 2012.

86.4 Councillors N.S. Coltman, G.G. Rowe and J.L. Blake declared personal interests and did not vote on the proposal that HOPS be paid £2,000 from 308a, Tourism & Leisure Grants budget of £2,500; as they are members of HOPS,

86.5 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Council set the annual budget/precept for 2012/2013 at £841,100 as detailed in the budget papers circulated with the Agenda and as Appendix FBO/11/8/86A to these minutes.

Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control

87.1 **RESOLVED** to note and adopt the report carried out by the four members of the Finance & Budget Oversight Committee on 28th November 2011 as circulated with the Agenda and as Appendix FBO/11/8/87A to these minutes.

Annual Grants 2012/2013

- 88.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend that Councillors Collinson, Grocock and Rowe form a sub-committee to consider the awarding of grants to local voluntary organisations for the year 2012/2013, including the grants to the Citizens' Advice Bureau and HOPS.

Annual Grants to Hailsham Pavilion and Citizens' Advice Bureau

- 89.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the annual grant payments to HOPS and the Citizens' Advice Bureau are paid as allocated in the 2011/2012 budget.

Finance & Budget Oversight Meeting dates for 2012/2013

- 90.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend that in addition to the existing meeting schedule, the Committee meets in July, September and November 2012 in order to consider future year's budgets. The actual dates to be finalised by the Town Clerk and Chairman and notified to the Committee.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10.14pm

CHAIRMAN