



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE, BUDGET, RESOURCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE

REPORT (Minutes)

of the meeting of the Finance, Budget Resources & Staffing Committee,
held at via **THE INTERNET**

On Wednesday 13th January 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

FBR/20/5/
36

Public Forum

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).

Present - K Davidson – Hailsham Citizen Advice Bureau

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Present: Cllrs G. Blake-Coggins, Cllr N. Coltman, Cllr R. Grocock, Cllr K. Hinton, Cllr P.Holbrook, Cllr T. Powis

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Officers Present: J. Harrison (Town Clerk) & M Foster (Finance Officer)

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Apologies For Absence: None

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Declarations of Interest: Cllr R. Grocock declared Prejudicial interest in the grants section of the meeting.

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Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED to accept the Minutes and Reports of the Meeting of the Finance, Budget, Resource & Staffing Committee held on the 9th December 2020 (Ref: FBR/20/5/29-35) as a correct record and that they are signed by the Chairman.

With an amendment to minute reference FBR/20/5/35 to read - Cllr Powis stated that the delivery of newsletter to households is not always effective.

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Accounts and Audit – Budget 2021 - 2022

42.1

The Finance Officer explained the supporting report explaining the changes to the budget since the previous budget meeting in December 2020, and the resolutions made by the committee at that meeting, for review at this final budget setting.

The Finance Officer highlighted the current Reserve and CIL levels of the Council as at 31.12.2020.

The tax base had been received and the budget adjusted accordingly, the tax base has been noted at 7584.2.

The shortfall after the adjustment of the tax base but including all the amendments made in the report is £39,385.00.

At the present the increase would be 3.5% on Band D tax rate, to cover the shortfall of £39,385.00.

The Town Clerk explained the following items, that were to be reviewed as resolution from the budget meeting of 9th December 2020 and formed budget report 2.

- Cemetery Pathway work
- Wet Pour replacement at various play areas
- Maintenance management plan
- Annual Community Grants
- Newsletter
- Staff Salaries

The Town Clerk stated that Wealden District Council's CIL Officer had responded in relation to Cemetery Pathways and Wet Pour replacement at various play areas can be fulfilled by using the council's CIL receipts. As such this expenditure will not be included in the 2021-2022 budget papers.

The Town Clerk mentioned about the committee decision to remove all Annual Grants for 2021-2022 including CAB and what impact that would have on the CAB.

Cllr R Grocock left the meeting 7.23pm

- 43 Kate Davidson from CAB explained the increase usage of the CAB due to the current Covid restrictions and impact. It was stated that without the grant it would be difficult to remain present in Hailsham.

The Town Clerk stated he had explored the option of the Hailsham Memorial Trust offering a peppercorn rent for 2021-2022 (and possibly the following year) but this should not be a long-term solution as it would not be financially sustainable for the charity. It had been clarified by the council's internal auditor that this would be a viable option. The council could then reduce the grant to CAB accordingly and thus make a saving.

The Finance Officer advised that the Trust had received a £10,000 support grant from Wealden District Council, which is available to cover the rent or on costs from CAB for the financial year.

Cllr Hinton stated that we should be aiming for as close to 0% increase as is possible.

- 43.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to council that:

The Memorial Trusts is to meet and agree to reduce CAB rent to a peppercorn amount for two years.

That HTC reduces the grant to CAB from £13,300 to a level where it covers the peppercorn amount plus the difference that used to fund the on costs of the building.

That No further Annual grants are awarded in 2021-2022.

44. The Finance Officer stated that the Maintenance Management plan for 2021-2022 has remained in the budget due to the ongoing deferment of necessary maintenance and repair needed on the Council assets. By removing this budget, it would require any additional expenditure on maintenance to be spent from Council reserves.

45. The Newsletter was discussed, and the committee looked at the options available.

- 45.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the newsletter to continue with current printer and distributor but to be reduced to 2 editions per year, with larger print if possible. This would create a saving of £3,300 per year.

- 46 The Wet pour replacement to various play areas as per Town Clerk report is to be allocated from CIL receipts.
- 46.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend that the work be undertaken in one go as opposed to over several years.
47. Staff Salaries; it was noted that the committee had previously discussed the possibility of not offering an increase, regardless of any government decision to increase NJC scale points in 2021-2022. As detailed in the Town Clerk's report, this would require removing staff from the National Terms and Conditions set by National Joint Council, for which there would be a legal process including consultation with HTC staff. It was decided by the Committee that it would not be an option.
- 47.1 **RESOLVED** not to recommend that changes to staff terms and conditions in contracts of employment are made and therefore to remain under NJC terms and conditions.
- Cllr Hinton stated that it was helpful to have the NJC information regarding staffing and employment so that all councillors can be made aware of the conditions and as such will not need to be discussed in the future.
- Cllr Hinton queried the following 3 items; Finance Officer explained:
- £20,000 Post Office Expenditure – What is this? – This is the council ongoing support towards the post office.
- 3% increase as per business plan: was this looked at budget by budget or just 1 overall uplift? – The 3% uplift was looked at budget by budget and where not required, no increase was incurred.
- Member Allowance – This is a full council decision, which will be an agenda item at Full Council meeting 27th January 2021.
44. **RESOLVED** to recommend to council a 3.2% increase to band rate.
NB; This is potentially to change due to the CAB grant.
- There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.20pm.

CHAIRMAN