



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE, BUDGET & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

REPORT (Minutes)

of the meeting of the Finance, Budget and Resources Committee,
held at the Fleur-De-Lys Council Chamber, Market Street, Hailsham, BN27 2AE
On Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

FBR/21/7/ **Public Forum** - None Presented
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59 **Present:** Cllrs G. Blake-Coggins (Chair), , N. Coltman, R. Grocock, M Laxton, T. Powis

60 **Officers Present:** J. Harrison (Town Clerk) & M. Webber (Finance Officer)

61 **Apologies For Absence:** Cllrs P. Holbrook, received and accepted

62 **Declarations of Interest:** None

63 **Minutes of previous meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Budget and Resources Committee held on 8th December 2021 are a true and accurate record and may be signed by the chairman.

64 **Accounts and Audit – Budget for 2022-2023**

The Finance Officer updated the committee with two items to be discussed since the issuing of the current budget papers.

Hailsham News advertising proposal for Hailsham Town Council for the coming year offering 2 options of every other month or monthly advertising of council events and services.

Newsletter distribution changes as the council current newsletter distributor is no longer offering the service. The Communications officer had some quotes to consider depending on the councils view for the newsletter in the coming year.

The Committee presented with the report prepared by the Finance Officer detailing the adjustments made to the budget over last few months and agreements made by committees and council affecting the budget.

- 3% increase across most of the budget areas as per the five-year budget in the business plan.
- Review of utilities across most sites for Electric/Gas and Water.
- Staffing costs adjusted to reflect scale point movements, pension costs, and pay increase as per government notification, this information due in the Autumn. See Below for update
- Members allowances reviewed and 3% increase agreed

Others factors to be considered

Covid-19 has had a consistent impact on the current figures in the first quarter of 2021-2022 due to facilities being closed so no hire income, the Covid-19 expenditure budget has been maintained at £5,000 for 2022-2023.

Post Office: there is £20,000 in the budget to help support the post office. There was a carry forward of £40,000 from 2020-2021 into the current year and as of 8th July 2021, there is £50,416.00 available. It was recommended that these were insufficient funds. A Post Office report with income details were presented to the committee. The committee agreed to increase the funds available for the Post Office to £60,000 as it is still very much a vital service for the town

Annual Grants to local community groups were removed in the 2021-2022 budget, is reinstated in the budget at £11,000 as per FBRC July meeting.

All hire and letting fees of properties/playing fields need to be reviewed as per Internal Audit requirement. At present the council are still trying to re-open facilities in line with government guidelines and increasing fees at this time may not be advisable. For pitch hire costs, it was resolved at AMC meeting on 28th April 2021 to waive the fees for 1 year.

Changing Places maintenance – Costings are required, so that it can be discussed further in the budget process. (£13,000 was the figure discussed in 2018-2019). This is to remain in the budget as FBRC meeting of 8th December 2021, as currently being review at Full Council on 26th January 2022.

Dog bin waste: FBRSC meeting on 29th January 2020 had resolved to ringfence any underspend from 2019/20 for replacement of solo dog bins for litter bins; all bins to be labelled for dual use of general waste and dog waste and marketing to start educating the public on dog waste disposal. £2,369.00 is ring-fenced for replacement bins as per this resolution. The budget has therefore been reduced by £15,000 to account for this.

The Outdoor Works Manager is currently reviewing the maintenance plan for 2022-2023 and at present it is to remain at the current level included in this budget.

Deputy Town Clerk advised that it would be prudent to include an additional £1,000 for the maintenance of the POS and play area at Brunel Drive (James West) once it's officially acquired by HTC. This was added to the budget of Play Areas/Public open spaces.

Other items.

Communities and Events; the costed budget for 2022-2023 set by the communities committee was agreed at Full council 14th October 2021, the budget has been adjusted to include costs for the Hailsham Run.

The Youth Service budget has been agreed with the Youth Service Manager, this includes an increase of £3,000 due to increase in the service provided.

The Outdoor Works manager advised the need for replacement tree stock an additional £4,000 added to the budget.

Election costs – To reinstate an election budget due to current election costs pending, at the agreement of the Town Clerk. £5,000 added to the budget papers.

Wages and salaries – All have been updated.

Members Allowance have been updated with the 3% increase resolved at Full Council on 24th November 2021.

Taking all the above adjustments into account as of 8th December 2021 there is a shortfall at present of £94,381.00 however this was dependent on the outcome of agreements in relation to items listed above

65 In relation to the new items for discussion.

Hailsham News proposal to referred to Full council meeting on 26th January 2022 as it does not change the current budget 2022-2023 as it would still be within the planned and costed communities budget which covers the advertising expenditure.

65.1 **RESOLVED** to refer to HTC meeting on 26th January 2022, to discuss the current and future options in relation to advertising.

66 Newsletter distribution was discussed as the quotes provided by the Communications Officer would require an increase in the budget for 2022-2023 should it be distribution under the same format (i.e., house to house). The increase would be in the region of £3,500.00.

The committee discussed the options and decided to revert to distribution from set locations within Hailsham, these locations would be – Post Office, Library, Tesco, Asda, and Waitrose and when possible, Doctors surgeries. There may be additional costs for stands for the newsletters to be used for distribution.

66.1 **RESOLVED** to refer to HTC 26th January 2022, with the proposal of newsletters being distributed from set locations in Hailsham (as per list above). This would not require an increase in the current budget for 2022-2023.

67 In respect of the recommendations above the shortfall was still at £94,381.00, precept increase options were discussed by the committee.

Cllr Powis spoke regarding that the Council cannot continue to agree to new projects or additional expenditure and then decided to remove them when it comes to budget setting. As it causes a false starting point for the following year budget setting, and it gets harder to bridge the gap.

The committee agreed that this should be a non-political agreement and the committee as whole agrees with the required increase of the precept.

67.1 **RESOLVED** to recommend to council a 8% increase to band rate.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.45pm

CHAIRMAN