



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE, BUDGET, & RESOURCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Finance, Budget, & Resources Committee,
held at the Fleur De Lys Council Chamber, Market Street, Hailsham, BN27 2AE
On Wednesday 21st December 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

FBR/22/4/
54

Public Forum

Mr P Gibson – No question.

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Present: Cllr N Coltman, R. Grocock, G. Blake-Coggins, S. Keogh, K. Lawrence, M Laxton and T. Powis

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Officers Present: Mr J. Harrison (Town Clerk) & Mrs M. Webber (RFO)

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Apologies For Absence: Cllr. P. Holbrook

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Declarations of Interest: None noted

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Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED to accept the Minutes and Reports of the Meeting of the Finance, Budget & Resource Committee held on the 19th October 2022, as a correct record and that they are signed by the Chairman.

60.

Accounts and Audit – Budget for 2023-2024

The RFO spoke to the report included in the papers of the meeting explaining the rationale behind each of the points. Which included the tax base for 2023-2024 of 7689.8 an increase of 14.4 homes.

The shortfall between the budget and the precept is £11,855.00.

The RFO explained the 3 main points to be discussed which would impact the current budget:

CAB grant reinstatement

Members Allowances

Professional fee budget

CAB Grant

Cllr Powis proposed to have the grant and in turn rent charges reinstated, however this requires a Charity Trust meeting to have it confirmed. The additional cost of £7,499.00.

61.

RESOLVED to recommend that a Charity trust meeting is held at 6.30pm prior to Full Council meeting, so that the recommendation of reinstatement can be addressed.

Members Allowances for 2023-2024

As per WDC remuneration panel – would require an additional £1,258.00 cost to the budget.

Cllr Lawrence felt it would be the wrong time to accept an increase in members allowances. This is a decision of Full Council and an agenda item for the January 2023 meeting.

Cllr Powis suggested that it could be possible to decrease the current allowance to the previous year.

62. **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that an increase is not accepted for 2023-2024.

The committee on these points would like to have 2 budgets provided at Full Council showing with/without the CAB grant reinstated. As such the increase in precept would be as follows:

Without CAB would require a 0.9% increase in the band D tax

With CAB it would require a 1.5% increase in the band D tax

NB – the committee original discussed 0.8% however on post meeting workings, it requires 0.9% as with 0.8% the shortfall would still be £1,781.61 instead of £551.00. As such the RFO has adjusted the % to 0.9%.

The committee discussed the following items.

Cllr Coltman wanted to know why the work on the Common Pond Island had not progressed, The Town Clerk advised that no such decision had been made and it was only discussed at the Finance committee in relation to the budget setting process.

63. **RESOLVED** to recommend that it's an agenda item at the next Asset Management Committee, so this can be looked at as a project to proceed with.

Cllr Laxton raised the issue around removing the Maintenance Plan expenditure from the budget which is current budget position with the cost of the Maintenance plan being fulfilled by CIL.

There was some confusion around the use of CIL for maintenance, the Town Clerk explained this in detail and stated that an email from WDC CIL officer would be forwarded to the Council for clarification.

The RFO stated that the committee should be aware of removing items from the budget as at some point in the future they will need to be reinstated which could cause higher costs than at the current time.

The Town Clerk wanted to discuss 2 potential items, but they contain confidential information to be discussed.

64. **Confidential Business**

RESOLVED that the press and public are temporarily excluded during the discussion on agenda item 11 as they concern the terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiation for contracts, terms and conditions of employment or are otherwise confidential information.

(In accordance with the Council's standing Orders No 1E.)

Cllr G. Blake-Coggins left the meeting at 7.55pm

65. **Professional Fees**

The Town Clerk discussed the need to look at increasing the professional fee budget and a large amount of work that requires a professional project manager.

The committee felt that at present nothing has been confirmed and it would require another meeting to discuss how to deal with the costs going forward. The RFO advised that if necessary General reserves/Contingency fund could be used in the interim. No further funds allocated to the budget.

66. Cortland Stable Block

The Town Clerk advised that a valuation has now been undertaken, and further discussions are taking place with the Landlord agents in relation to a possible large rent increase.

The committee suggested further meetings with the Landlord and to look further into what the options are available to the Council. No further funds to be allocated to the budget.

67. The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council the following 2 precept amounts depending on the recommendations listed above.

With CAB – the precept request of £1,274,046 which requires an increase of 1.5% for band D

Without CAB – the precept request of £1,267,061 which requires an increase of 0.9% for band D.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.

CHAIRMAN