



HAILSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
STRATEGY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of the meeting of the Strategy Committee,
held at the, Fleur-De-Lys Council Chamber, Market Street, Hailsham
On Monday 10th October 2022 at 7.00 p.m.

- StC/22/3/1 **Public Forum**
3 None presented
- 14 **Present:** Cllrs; D. Cottingham, P. Holbrook (Chair), S. Keogh, M. Laxton, J. Puttick and A-M Ricketts.
- 15 **Officers Present:** J. Harrison (Town Clerk) & M. Webber (Responsible Finance Officer)
- 16 **Apologies For Absence:** received and accepted from Cllrs A. Clarke, N. Coltman, R. Newark, K. Nicholls and T. Powis.
- 17 **Declarations of Interest:**
None given
- 18 **Confirmation of Minutes**
RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the meeting of the Strategy Committee held on the 11th July 2022 as a correct record and that they are signed by the Chairman.
- 19 **Budget Approach**
Mrs Webber addressed the committee regarding the budget approach taken by the Finance, Budget and Resources Committee.
- 19.1 As detailed in the report to committee:

Using the 2022-2023 budget as the baseline for setting the 2023-2024 budget, The RFO has reviewed the ongoing expenditure costs to the council and have made the following adjustments:
- . 3% increase across most of the budget areas as per the five-year budget in the business plan.
 - . New Lease agreement due for Cortlandt Stable block – INFO PENDING
 - . increase in utilities across most sites for Electric/Gas and Water due to increase prices, these are based on 2022-2023 actuals.
 - . Western Road Recreation pathway needs repair quotation attached for these works.
 - . Burial Fee increases of 5% for 2023-2024 included in the budget.
 - . All SCP and JNC increase have been applied and potential increase/decrease of national insurance costings applied.
 - . Member Allowances for 2023-2024 – INFO PENDING DUE DECEMBER 2022
- 19.2 Other factors considered and discussed by the FBRC on 3rd August 2022 were as follows:
- . Common Pond Island tree works – this will be a considerable amount of work required. £5,000
 - . New Teen shelters at Western Road Recreation ground and Maurice Thornton recreation ground require a maintenance budget, provisionally £1,000 per shelter for 2023-2024 to be reviewed.

. James West Hall will need an increase in budget due to higher utilities for air conditioning unit, water, maintenance of the building, cleaning. £28,000

. Street lighting annual repairs - £12,384.00 based on a 5-year average as per FBRC recommendation.

. Post Office is an area for discussion as at present there is £60,000 in the budget to help support the post office, but there is a Post office Sub-committee reviewing the situation of the post office.

Taking all the above adjustments into account as at 5th October 2022 there is a shortfall at present of £100,475, in the overall budget, however this will change depending on the outcome of discussions in relation to items listed above and the decisions of the committees.

With the current shortfall the Band D precept increase required would be 8% with a drawn from reserves of £247.10. 8% would be an additional £13.05 per year.

19.3 At Asset Management Committee Meeting 28th September 2022, the budget was discussed, and a list of possible savings identified as follows.

Bus Concessions	£8,000
Island Maintenance Common Pond	£5,000
Maintenance Plan	£29,675 (half of the original budget, so in theory extending the maintenance plan by 1 year)
Changing Places	£13,000
Urban Grass Cutting	£9,500
Total Savings	£65,175

Leaving a shortfall remaining of £35,300

This shortfall would require a 2.9% increase in Band D precept, this equates to an additional £4.73 per year.

19.4 The other factor to come into account is the movement in band D tax base which in 2022-2023 is 7675.4. HTC will not be advised of the tax base until December 2022 but in light of the low amount of CIL received to date, we are not expecting a high tax base movement. At present the required increase in homes would be 615.5.

19.5 The finance committee discussed using CIL for maintenance costs in the interim, however by doing this it would reduce the CIL funds available to undertake future projects. It had been discussed that any future CIL projects proceeded over the next 2 years should be projects without any oncosts to the Council so as not to increase the revenue budget and in turn precept.

19.6 The current situation is variable, as per a discussion at a Finance Summit recently there are the following factors to bear in mind.

Reduction in tax base due to the cost-of-living crisis and an increase of universal credit/housing benefit claims, which results in the household being removed from the tax base numeration.

Government cap on Town/Parish council precept increases, at present there is not one, but there may be a feel to induce one due to cost-of-living crisis.

Increase costs due to the council on utilities etc.

If a cap is to be introduced, we won't be advised until January 2023, as consultation takes

place in December 2022.

Please be advised that this is a fluid situation and will change before the final budget papers go before Full Council in January 2023.

- 19.7 The Communities Committee met on Monday 3rd October, and the costed plan for 2023-2024 was reviewed and the following potential savings put forward.

No Additional Flags for the Coronation - £2,000
No Summer/French Market - £2,005.00
Total Saving £4,005.00

Taking this into account the overall budget is now £1,284,151, and shortfall being £31,295.00, the increase in the precept required is 2.5% - £167.31 per band D.

- 19.8 Full Council met on 5th October 2022; the above suggestions on savings were put to Council.

It was felt that in the current situation the council should aim for 0% increase in the precept. As such 3 shadow budgets was suggested, they are as follows.

1 – The current budget as it stands with a potential 8% increase

2 - The budget after the savings of the Assets Management Committee and Communities Committee with a potential increase of 2.5%

3 – A budget with further reductions on expenditure leading to a possible 0% increase – there are 2 budgets for this as there are options.

To achieve the 0%, increase the following further reductions introduced.

In Budget 0%

£11,000 – Annual Grants
£17,720 – Further reduction of the Maintenance Plan – Leaving £11,995.00
£1,060 – Cortlandt Stable block maintenance – Current carry forward of £4,390
£515 – Skate Park Maintenance – Current carry forward of £2,060
£1,000 – Teen Shelter Maintenance – reduced from £2,000 to £1,000

Saving - £31,295
In Budget 0% - No HR Support Role

£11,000 – Annual Grants
£16,182 – HR Support
£1,060 – Cortlandt Stable Block maintenance – Current carry forward of £4,390
£515 – Skate Park Maintenance – Current carry forward of £2,060
£1,000 – Teen Shelter Maintenance – reduced from £2,000 to £1,000
Saving - £29,757

This would leave a draw down from reserves of £1,538

- 19.9 The process from here would be to take the proposed budgets back through the Finance committee in December and then for a final recommendation to full council in January. The RFO will attend committees in November for final checks and recommendations.

The Committee agreed they were happy with the proposals as presented and the process.

20 **Progress Against the Town Council's Strategic Plan**

The committee considered the report by exception.

John Harrison highlighted the following:

Street Market: recently expanded from 5 to 10 traders. WDC seem to be more open to taking on new market stalls.

Hailsham Card now being sold at the Post Office and is selling quite well.

Playground specification went onto Government Procurement Gateway on Friday and have had good response so far. Has six-week deadline for responses. Assets Committee meeting in November will be moved back two week to allow committee to decide on tenders received.

We are still waiting for information from WDC regarding Welbury Farm and the deveoper's planning obligations.

Youth Shelter – issues recently experienced seem to have settled down through Police work and intervention from the HTC Youth Team.

HTC Youth Services now being offered at Hellingly, James West and Hailsham East CC.

Appraisal system has been rolled out to most staff – have all been implemented.

MASHH Meeting has recently taken place, looking at the main interventions on A22, South Road roundabout designs and issues with Sturton Place junction.

No more Questions raided on the current plan

21 **Confidential Business**

RESOLVED that the press and public are excluded during the discussion on the next item of the agenda as they concern employment issues and the terms of tenders and proposals and counter proposals in negotiation for contracts, or are otherwise confidential information.to go into confidential business.

22 **Progress against the Town Council's Strategic (Confidential Items)**

The Committee noted ongoing issues highlighted regarding ongoing projects on this part of the strategic plan.

23 There being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.42pm

CHAIRMAN