

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, St Ives Town Council, held in the Committee Room, The Guildhall, St Ives on Thursday 23 November 2017 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Chairman – Councillor R Tulley
Vice-Chairman – Councillor C Nicholls

COUNCILLORS

Andrewes T	Mitchell A
Garrod H	Symons J
Harris A	Tanner S
Henry R	Williams T

OFFICERS

Town Clerk
Facilities Manager

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – were received from Councillors R Glanville and K Hughes.

F&GP.57 PUBLIC SPEAKING

A representative from St Ives BID attended to speak in support of the proposed public realm CCTV initiative.

F&GP.58 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 28 September 2017.

F&GP.59 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that:

- An additional confidential report: “Safety Measures for New Year’s Eve” had been included as an urgent item on the agenda
- Confidential report: “CCTV – Approval of Annual Maintenance & Monitoring Contract” would be considered earlier than scheduled in the meeting, following report 2, as the decision on this item would inform the budget setting item which would then follow.

F&GP.60 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLOR AND OFFICER INTERESTS

None.

F&GP.61 TOWN CLERK’S UPDATE REPORT

Members considered the report circulated prior to the meeting.

With regard to Minute F&GP.501 (property rent reviews) , Councillors were keen to see the rent reviews take place. The Town Clerk gave an undertaking to do so.

RESOLVED – that the Clerk’s update report be noted.

F&GP.62 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT ON FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2017

It was reported that the external auditor's report had been returned with no comment on the town council's accounts and an advisory note regarding two Trusts administered by the town council, requiring annual general meetings to be held.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted and that the role of finance staff and externally commissioned accounts support be noted with appreciation.

F&GP.63 FINANCE REPORT – INCLUDING STAFFING, RESERVES AND BALANCE SHEET

Members considered the finance report (including staff costs figures and the balance sheet), circulated prior to the meeting.

During discussion, it was agreed that

- items under professional fees be re-coded (library devolution funding)
- it should be noted that in the public conveniences cleaning budget for this year, the cleaning and materials / operational costs had been split.

RESOLVED – that the finance report be noted, and taken into account as part of the budget setting process later in this meeting.

F&GP.64 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – “That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meeting) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.”

F&GP.65 CCTV – APPROVAL OF ANNUAL MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING CONTRACT (Paragraph 3)

At its meeting on 13 November 2017, Council received a confidential report about the costs of supporting a public realm CCTV system in St Ives. Council heard that £25,000 had been committed by St Ives BID and £13,911 by the Police Crime Commissioner (PCC).

BID's and the PCC's funding commitments were based on the proposal to supply, install, maintain and monitor a six-camera system by CFRS, with the remainder of the cost being met by the town council. It was noted that the PCC's award of funding had been notified verbally, with written confirmation and grant conditions to follow. Council had previously resolved:

to make a capital contribution of £7,500 towards the installation of a public realm CCTV system as set out in the report, and to defer a decision on the annual maintenance and monitoring funding commitment to be considered as part of the budget setting process at the next scheduled meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Members considered the report which set out:

- Options available for joining the Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) system
- Maintenance and monitoring options and costs, for the CFRS system
- Financial regulations and audit compliance
- The CFRS system and alternative options

Councillor Garrod raised concerns with regard to the interpretation and application of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, noting an apparent contradiction between those two documents. This will be rectified by the Town Clerk and the documents brought back to Council for ratification.

The Chairman noted the concern regarding when three quotes should be sought, or competitive tendering should be undertaken. He advised that the CFRS is effectively a consortium which had followed a procurement process that could be considered to be sufficient to demonstrate that due process had been followed with regard to competitive sourcing.

The meeting noted that the CFRS consortium is the only that solution that has a link to county hall, and a direct link with West Cornwall police and Shop Watch scheme. A key benefit of joining the consortium would be the significant grant funding committed to that scheme from the PCC and from St Ives BID, which could not be guaranteed under any other scheme. Councillors noted that the consortium approach is being adopted by Penzance and Bodmin Town Councils

RECOMMENDED – that

- 1) Council is asked to approve that the committed £7,500 should be allocated from Reserves;
- 2) a decision is made to proceed with the CFRS consortium approach and so to sign up to the CFRS contract on the basis of Option 2 of the quote circulated with the report); and
- 3) budget provision of £9,129 be made for the maintenance and monitoring of the public realm CCTV system in 2018/2019, acknowledging that this would be the first year of a seven-year contract.

F&BP.66 **RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – that the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

F&GP.67 **BUDGET SETTING 2018/2019**

The Town Clerk's written report set out the purpose of the budget-setting process and the key considerations for Councillors.

The committee considered the recommendations put forward by the two other standing committees and the draft budget circulated prior to the meeting which had drawn together the figures agreed by the committees and further advice from officers.

During discussion the following matters were considered:

- The potential for the town council to budget for a contribution to cost of running a Citizens Advice Bureau for St Ives. Councillor Mitchell provided an update on the situation regarding the CAB from his perspective as the Portfolio Holder at Cornwall Council.
- The frequency and cost of testing the support structure of the decorative lights was raised. It was suggested that the Facilities Manager should seek quotes

- The amount budgeted for district audit was raised to £1,600
- The budget allocation for the testing of the decorative lights was increased to £4,000.
- Concert hall staff costs was amended to £22,000
- Library and VIC staff costs are to be recalculated prior to the council meeting at which the budget will be set to take account of Living Wage and annual salary increases.
- Committee considered increasing the budget for the cleaning contract and noted that the in-house maintenance had brought about savings in the cost of repair and maintenance. The cleaning contract is in the process of being renegotiated.
- The Facilities Manager reported that there would be a need for significant maintenance work at the St Nicholas Chapel in the near future
- Noted that to cover the potential increase in FMO hours, further reductions were required from the repair & maintenance budget lines were needed: £300 from Island Centre, £1,000 from toilets, £700 from Huers Hut)
- The grant income from footpaths would be adjusted.
- Staff wages costs and vehicle costs transferred from the C&E Committee budget to that of the Facilities Committee.

RECOMMENDED – to Council that

- 1) The budget for 2018/2019 as circulated with this report be recommended to Council for approval;
- 2) The precept for 2018/2019 be recommended to Council for approval
- 3) The use of reserves proposed, be recommended to Council for approval.

F&GP.68 **GRANTS**

An application had been received from St Ives in December for a grant of £1,000 towards a lantern making project. The community benefit of the project and the other funding avenues available to the applicants were noted.

RESOLVED – that a grant of £250 be awarded to St Ives in December for the purposes set out in the application.

F&GP.69 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED – “That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meeting) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.”

F&GP.70 **ACCOUNTS PACKAGE**

Members considered the report which set out the need to review the Council’s accounting software package, noting that the rapid growth of the Council and the increasing complexity of its finances had prompted a review to ensure that the accounts function could operate effectively and efficiently.

Potential systems had been reviewed against an evaluation criteria, on the advice of the council’s accounting support adviser. The Town Clerk and Finance Officers had arranged to visit

neighbouring councils operating the potential preferred accounts packages, to ascertain their suitability for the accounts work of this council.

The committee agreed that the new system needs to be able to deal with reserves used in year, and to allow multiple members of staff to do invoicing. The Town Clerk was asked to ensure packages had different levels of access.

On the basis that either the RBS Omega or the AdvantEdge financial management systems would meet the needs of the council, it was

RESOLVED – that

- 1) the Town Clerk (in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this committee) be delegated to decide upon which of these two packages to purchase, pending demonstrations of both; and

RECOMMENDED – to Council that

- 2) the council purchases the preferred financial management system, including purchase order and phased budget modules, with the intention that the system will be ready for use in the 2018/2019 financial year or earlier if possible.

F&GP.71 **REVIEW OF STAFF STRUCTURE**

In introducing the Town Clerk's written report, the Chairman noted that staffing capacity is being stretched by the current workload, which will only increase with the transfer of the library and information service, better marketing of the concert hall, meeting room and council facilities etc. The need for a staffing review was agreed to be urgent and important but had to be carried out thoroughly.

The chairman proposed that the committee chairmen should form a small working group to examine the issue. It would devise a proposed structure which would be put to Council or would advise that an external consultant should be commissioned to do that work. It was agreed that any interested councillors would be allowed to join the working group. It was stated that consultation with staff was essential, and that their job plans should be reviewed. Councillors noted that if the review is carried out in-house, the officer time required would result in other areas of work being deferred, stopped, or reassigned.

RESOLVED - that a working group of committee chairmen and interested councillors should consider key staffing issues, consider potential improvements to the staff structure, and prepare a report to Council with the aim of recommending a draft staff structure to be presented to Council for decision.

F&GP.72 **REVIEW OF SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

In view of the references to specific job posts throughout it, it was

RESOLVED – that the Scheme of Delegation be reviewed alongside the staff structure review.

F&GP.73 **JOB EVALUATION / STAFF APPRAISALS / REVIEW OF STAFF SALARIES**

The Town Clerk reported that job evaluation was recommended in light of potential review and development of job roles with the forthcoming library transfer and staffing review, along with existing job descriptions which had been identified through staff appraisals to have changed to the extent that they should be re-evaluated. At this point in the year it was usual for a review of staff salaries and so this year this review was likely to be linked to a job evaluation exercise. It was also noted that the report on the outcome of staff appraisals had been scheduled for this meeting but would be deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee.

RESOLVED – that

- 1) a report on Job Evaluation and/or salary review be presented to the next meeting of this committee
- 2) an update on the outcome of the recent staff appraisals be reported to the next meeting of this committee.

F&GP.74 **DEBTORS AND CREDITORS**

The debtors and creditors report was considered. It was noted that officers were taking steps to minimise outstanding payments due to the council. The Clerk explained the reason for the delay in issuing the final invoice for the decorative lights contributions from St Ives BID, noting that the Decorative Lights Association had stated that their contribution would be paid upon receipt of the breakdown of the final costs involved.

RESOLVED – that the report was noted.

F&GP.75 **SAFETY MEASURES FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE** (Paragraph 3)

Members received a report from the Facilities Manager which reported on a recent meeting that had considered various aspects of the forthcoming celebrations. At that meeting, St Ives BID, the town council and Cornwall Council had been asked to consider sharing the cost of providing vehicles that would be used as mobile road blocks on the evening. The contribution through the council tax to the police in the past year was noted, and councillors commented on how rarely the police appear to be in the town.

The detail of the request was debated, following which it was

RESOLVED – that the town council not take action with regard to the matters raised in the report.

Meeting closed at 9.20 pm

Chairman