

MINUTES of the **Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee** Meeting held on Thursday 19 December 2019 at 6.30 p.m. in the Shire House Suite, Shire House, Bodmin

PRESENT: Councillor P T Cooper presiding, together with Councillors E M Ahearn, J P Cooper (arrived at 6.33 p.m. during Chairman's announcements and apologies), D A Henderson, A M Kerridge, S H Kinsman and K J Phillips.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Facer (Town Clerk), Mrs A Banks (Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)), Mr R Davies (Parks and Open Spaces Manager (POSM)); left at 8.37 p.m. and from item FSPM/2019/108), Mr P Martin (Deputy Chief Executive (DCE)) and Mrs B Briggs (Senior Admin Assistant (SAA)).

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES:

Apologies had been received from Councillor L L Frost.

The Chairman noted that he had requested the RFO had circulated an electronic copy of 'A Councillor's Workbook on Local Government Finance' and all of the financial data referenced in this document. He hoped that all Members had reviewed this information and found it helpful.

The Chairman noted that Mr P Martin had recently been invited to London to give a presentation on a paper he had written on the impact of off-licensing sales on Communities. The Canadian Government had since picked up on the research and have also invited him to present his findings. Although noted related to his work at Bodmin Town Council, the Chairman wished to recognise Mr Martin's achievement and offer the Council's congratulations.

Councillor J P Cooper arrived at 6.33 p.m.

		Action	Date
FSPM/2019/101	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>		
FSPM/2019/102	<p>Public Representation Session</p> <p>There were no members of the public present.</p>		
FSPM/2019/103	<p>To consider and, if approved, adopt the Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2019</p> <p>A copy of the minutes was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that these minutes had been through Full Council where actions had been agreed.</p> <p>All actions had been completed as set out, other than the following where an update was provided:</p> <p>FSPM/2019/085(e) – IT equipment for Councillors – the RFO updated Members that she has been liaising with Councillors with regards to their specific individual requirements. She had been advised by Microtest that the equipment detailed in the previous quote was no longer available and a revised quotation had been received from Microtest. The RFO had requested the model number of the</p>		

	<p>equipment in the revised quote to allow her to source three quotes. She was awaiting this information from Microtest.</p> <p>The RFO also confirmed that Microtest have indicated they would be able to provide an evening training session for Members on their new equipment.</p> <p>FSPM/20190/087 – Three-year budget plan – it was noted that there was a document related to this item later on the agenda (minute ref FSPM/2019/104(b) refers).</p> <p>The Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2019 were approved and passed for signing.</p>		
FSPM/2019 /104	<p>Update on BTC Key Objectives, to include:</p> <p>a) Update on current Key Objectives (to be discussed under item 17(a))</p> <p>It was noted that this item would be discussed later on the agenda (minute ref FSPM/2019/116(a) refers).</p> <p>b) 2020-21 Aims and Objectives – to note Policy Committee recommendation to Full Council (minute ref POL/2019/050 refers);</p> <p>A copy spreadsheet was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk noted that this spreadsheet had been produced by staff following the Policy Committee meeting held on 5 December to reflect the outcome of the discussions at that meeting.</p> <p>Councillor J P Cooper commented that, having been at the Policy Committee meeting where this matter was discussed, he did not feel that the discussion had done justice to the item and he felt that this was in a rush to complete the meeting. He also felt that this document did not encapsulate all the objectives of the Council going forward and should not be adopted. Other Members agreed with this position.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that his proposed Community Toilet Scheme was not included on this list, and that the Neighbourhood Plan was also missing.</p> <p>It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan was a current objective and that the list should reflect the fact this was to be carried forward.</p> <p>The RFO noted that some of the proposed objectives were paper based exercises which staff would carry out as part of their day-to-day work and were not required to be on this list. She commented that the purpose of this exercise was to assist in preparing the three-year budget. In order to do this, she needed to know what the Council would like to achieve in terms of where they wished to allocate money to future projects.</p>		

	<p>There followed some discussion about the format of the new set of objectives, with some Members expressing concerns about how many objectives could realistically be agreed and that resources in terms of money and staff time required consideration.</p> <p>The Town Clerk suggested that, since a meeting to discuss the objectives prior to the 5 December Policy Committee meeting had not taken place as planned, it might be prudent to look at budgeting for the upcoming year in the first instance in order that the RFO was able to accurately reflect budgetary requirements in the budget to be presented at the FS&PM Budgets meeting to be held on 2 January 2020 and that Members might want to further consider agreeing the new set of aims and objectives to be built into the budget for future years.</p> <p>The RFO suggested the possibility of agreeing a provisional sum in consideration of years 2 and 3 of the budget, could be adjusted and allocated accordingly at a later date. This would allow for Members to focus on the precept for the forthcoming budget year.</p> <p>Councillor J P Cooper suggested that the objectives be carried forward in the same headline format as was used last year, including all current objectives which were still in progress, and with completed objectives being overwritten by new ones.</p> <p>The Town Clerk noted that the approach of some councils was to agree an acceptable precept increase, for example 3%, and work within that sum in terms of allocation of funds. Members considered that this might be a good approach and noted the importance of keeping the precept rise minimal for the community.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was AGREED to RECOMMEND not adopting the objective document in its entirety.</p> <p>Instead, it was AGREED to RECOMMEND that items be selected from this list as appropriate with the overriding factor being constraint of the precept increase.</p> <p>It was further AGREED to RECOMMEND that the desired precept rise for the 2020-21 budget should be limited to 3% if possible.</p>		
<p>FSPM/2019 /105</p>	<p>Budget information, to include:</p> <p>a) Year to date budget summary to 30 November 2019 – RFO to report on variances</p> <p>A copy of the budget summary was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO noted that, as agreed during the Special Council meeting held on 17 December 2019, (minute ref C/2019/328 refers) the budget had been presented in a new format reflecting the new committee structure.</p> <p>Members queried the breakdown of costs in relation to line 131 – Priory Park. The RFO noted that this information had previously been</p>		

	<p>emailed out to all Members but that she would follow up on this the following day.</p> <p>There then followed discussion relating to Member expenses. The RFO explained that these do not get paid until year-end and any underspend was kept in reserves to cover replacement IT devices or other unexpected expenditure.</p> <p>This document was noted.</p> <p>b) Project budget updates</p> <p>A copy of the budget update was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO noted that this list was accurate up to the end of November 2019 as was as set out.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that the staff review looked to come in under budget and noted that the excess funding could be used for future IT, Risk Management and Health and Safety reviews.</p> <p>This document was noted.</p> <p>c) Reserves</p> <p>A copy of the Earmarked Reserves was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO noted that this list had not changed since it's last circulation to members and was as set out.</p> <p>There then followed a lengthy discussion regarding the possibility of BTC discharging responsibility of a new cemetery to Cornwall Council and ceasing management of burial services once the current cemetery was full and required closure for new interments.</p> <p>Some Members felt that Cornwall Council were offering this service in other towns/parishes and Bodmin should expect the same. Other Members felt that the provision of cemetery services was historical, that Cornwall Council were unlikely to look to take on this responsibility, and that it was important to retain money in the budget to take this project forward as an essential provision to residents. It was also noted that the aim of Cornwall Council was that all their current cemetery sites was to run on a cost-neutral basis.</p> <p>The Town Clerk commented that in had previously been reported to Council that Cornwall Council had agreed to transfer the land at a nominal fee and that testing of the land was due to commence, as agreed by Full Council on 21 November 2019 (minute ref C/2019/294 refers). The tenant on this site had been notified and would retain grazing rights. As previously reported, a year would be required in order to test the land in all seasons and it was important that this work progress in order that a new cemetery site be in place prior to the closure of the current cemetery when it reached capacity.</p> <p>The Town Clerk noted that there was some difference of opinion as to whether cemetery provision was a legal responsibility of BTC. He noted that BTC were currently a burial authority and that any future</p>		
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	<p>provision was therefore expected but that, during a recent meeting held with Cornwall Council's bereavement services team it had been suggested that this responsibility was not statutory. The Town Clerk advised that the wording in the legislation was 'may provide' and whilst he had not looked at this in detail, it suggested an ability for a local council to review its position, and take any legal advice as necessary. There was a concern from some Members over the potential for reputational damage should BTC withdraw this service. Other Members felt that any reputational damage would sit with Cornwall Council should they not wish to take on the provision.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was AGREED to RECOMMEND that the Town Clerk write to Cornwall Council thanking them for their offer of land transfer of the identified site. But that it should be recognised that, following testing, the site might not be suitable and that, as it appears that there is no other suitable land in Bodmin for BTC to acquire for this purpose, BTC would be looking to discharge the responsibility of identifying a new site and provision of a new cemetery to Cornwall Council.</p> <p>d) Fixed asset register</p> <p>A copy of the Fixed Asset Register was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO noted that bringing this register to meetings meant Members coming into the office to undertake the assertion review were able to complete less questions. She explained that acquisitions with a value of £6,000.00 or higher were added to this list and that the figures in the blue column represented the value of the items.</p> <p>This document was noted.</p>		
FSPM/2019 /106	<p>Project to update Health and Safety Policy, parts 1, 2 and 3 – to consider budgetary implications and, if appropriate, agree 2020/21 budget allocation – Item referred from Policy Committee held on 5 December 2019 (minute ref POL/2019/055 refers)</p> <p>The DCE reported that the aim of this project was to set a foundation for good practices. It was noted that responsibility for this project going forward would change under the new committee structure as agreed at the Special Council meeting held on 17 December 2019 (minute ref C/2019/328 refers) and that this would be confirmed in due course but that, under the new structure, this project would sit under the Policy & Resources Committee and ensuring the policies were implemented would be the responsibility of the Risk Management Working Group.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that this has been a key concern of his since joining the Council and that a great deal of progress had already been made. He noted that health and safety was a legal responsibility of BTC but that it was also a personal responsibility of all employees.</p> <p>There then followed some discussion regarding the inclusion of H&S responsibility within staff job descriptions. The RFO highlighted that this should take the form of a policy which was referred to within job descriptions, to prevent the situation where every job description required update every time there was a change to the H&S policy.</p>		

	<p>The DCE noted that there was a provision in the budget for this project to instruct a consultant to review current practices and identify gaps, as well as the implementation of a H&S database.</p> <p>There then followed discussion as to whether it was appropriate to adopt this report and the recommendations therein, in order to progress the project, with some Members feeling that this was the best way forward whilst others felt costings should be provided prior to adoption of the recommendations relating to costs.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was AGREED to RECOMMEND adopting the report and the recommendations therein, with the DCE to bring costs back to a future meeting.</p> <p>It was further AGREED to RECOMMEND that an appropriate sum of money be allocated to this project within the 2020-21 budget having resolved to adopt recommendations to allocate £5,000.00 for implementation of a database and £8,000.00 for instruction of a consultant.</p>		
<p>FSPM/2019 /107</p>	<p>Community and civic events – Councillor P T Cooper to report</p> <p>The Chairman reported that he felt that BTC was a victim of its own success, spending a significant amount of time engaging with the community and assisting with the coordination of community events. He noted that the Bodmin Remembrance Day event was viewed as an excellent event. He noted his concern that the increasing numbers of public attending these events was something BTC should consider, feeling that there was the perception in the town that the responsibility for health and safety at town events was placed on it.</p> <p>The Town Clerk highlighted that the Joint Fireworks Committee had engaged a consultant to advise on health and safety considerations of their growing event and that BTC could advise other committees and organisations to do the same. It was noted that it was important for all events to have robust risk assessments in place and that, although BTC were in a position to advise organisations of the importance of having these documents, it could not fall on them to produce such documents on behalf of third party organisations.</p> <p>Some Members made the distinction between civic events and those taking place on BTC owned land, and others which were entirely separate to BTC. There was some concern over BTC getting too heavily involved in all events and increasing the risk of liability falling on it as well as the pressure on budget and staff of delivering support at additional events. It was noted that a line must be drawn based on the limited nature of BTC resources and that it could not be expected to engage the services of a consultant to advise on every event.</p> <p>Members considered that this issue would fall under the remit of the Community Services Committee under the new committee structure which was to be implemented by the Council in May 2020.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND that the Community Services Committee prioritise this item on their first agenda.</p>		

<p>FSPM/2019 /108</p>	<p>Update on contactless payment option in Bodmin Information Centre – item referred from Shire House Complex Advisory Committee (minute ref SHA/2019/058 refers) – RFO to report</p> <p>The RFO reported that the device currently used by the Information Centre already had the capability to process contactless payments, however it was necessary for her to conduct a review in relation to Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard compliance in terms of BTC holding personal details.</p> <p>In terms of taking deposits for hirers, it was noted that contactless payment would not be possible due to the deposit of £100 being over the £30 contactless limit. However, the RFO noted that preauthorising someone’s card or holding their money digitally was a move away from current practices and the requirements in relation to holding personal and bank details would require a significant piece of work on her part.</p> <p>Some Members felt that it was important for BTC to be able to offer a contactless facility as well as the ability to hold digital deposits and that this work should be progressed. The RFO noted that she would undertake this piece of work as agreed by Committee, but that Members should be aware of the time delay before she would be able to deliver this due to a number of significant projects she was currently undertaking, including preparation of budgets.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND that Bodmin Town Councillors visiting other Councils should ask how they had set up their systems of taking deposits and report back to future Committee Meetings in order to review and adopt best practice.</p>		
<p>FSPM/2019 /109</p>	<p>HSBC Premier Discretionary Management Service Portfolio Statement 1 July to 30 September 2019</p> <p>A copy of the statement was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>This document was noted.</p>		
<p>FSPM/2019 /110</p>	<p>Bodmin Lions bingo events – to consider use of Courtroom II for period of Shire House Suite works</p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that there was an impact to regular hirers of the Shire House Suite given the roofing works taking place from 6 January 2020. The Lions Bingo organiser requested use of Court II. Although not possible to accommodate the same numbers as the Suite, it could provide some interim bingo sessions, to avoid losing the event from the community calendar.</p> <p>In terms of any fire risk assessment issue, the Town Clerk reported that KBM fire safety services have clarified that the front main/foyer entrance and rear entrance would need to open to maintain a safe emergency access route. The maximum number that could be accommodated in Court II is 70 people, subject to access and egress</p>		

	<p>through all doors, and room configuration would need to be considered.</p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that opening the building would pose a risk in terms of building security which would need cover and that Kestrel Guards fees to cover the Lions booking would be £47.00 plus VAT (6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. – 4 hours at 11.75 per hour).</p> <p>The Town Clerk outlined the current charges to the Lions at £44.33 plus VAT for use of the Suite and an additional £5.00 plus VAT for use of the PA system, with the current arrangement that Kestrel Guards attend to unlock at 6.00 p.m. costing £25.00 plus VAT, which is not recharged to the Lions.</p> <p>The Town Clerk enquired as to whether Members would look to accommodate Lions Bingo sessions in the Shire Hall during Suite roof works and, given the disruption, would they be minded to offer the room hire free of charge but requesting that they cover the cost of Kestrel Guards, or would Members look to charge the Lions for the room hire, bearing in mind the reduced numbers Court II would be able to accommodate.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was AGREED to RECOMMEND offering the hire of Court II to Bodmin Lions Bingo free of charge during the Shire House Suite refurbishment works, subject to the cost of £47.00 plus VAT for Kestrel Guards being recharged to the Lions.</p>		
FSPM/2019 /111	<p>Risk management update</p> <p>A copy of the risk management update was circulated prior to the meeting.</p> <p>This document was noted.</p>		
FSPM/2019 /112	<p>To consider and, if appropriate, pass for payment the Schedule of Accounts for December 2019</p> <p>A copy of the schedule was circulated at the meeting.</p> <p>Payment ref 4300001867 – Electricity charges – this cost was queried based on the lights surrounding the pond not currently being operational. It was clarified that this related to charges for Priory Car Park lights. It was noted that quotes were currently being sought for repair of the lights surrounding the pond.</p> <p>The schedule of accounts for December 2019 was approved and passed for signing from payment ref 4300001854 to payment ref 43000001910.</p>		

Due to the confidential nature of the next business it was **RESOLVED** to go into Committee. Please see separate page.