

Minutes of the meeting of the FINANCE COMMITTEE held in Rickards Hall on Monday 17 December 2018 at 7.54pm

Present: Cllrs T Bryant, Mrs J Davison, A Layland, M McArthur, S McGregor, (Chairman), Z Roberts Smith and J Scholey (Vice Chairman)

In attendance: (Admin Officer), (Finance Officer). No members of the press or public were present.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received, noted and accepted from Cllrs R Bell (unwell), B Orridge (unwell) and B Todd (prior engagement).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Mrs J Davison and A Layland Pecuniary interest Item 7.1

3. TO RECEIVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2018

Resolved: that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 26 November be signed by the Committee Vice Chairman as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES FOR REPORT AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

None.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND ANALYSIS OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS

Members noted in detail the income and expenditure transactions for the month and

Resolved: that Cllrs J Scholey and S McGregor should sign the Financial Statement for the end of November confirming the analysis of receipts and payments, paid expenditure transactions, and authorising the payments of unpaid expenditure transactions. To approve the financial comparisons and to accept the transfers into and out of reserve accounts.

5.6 Fund Transfer

Capital Reserves

Transfer In: Nil

Transfer Out: Nil

Revenue reserves

Transfer In: Nil

Transfer Out: £22,000.00

5.7 Paragraphs 5.1 to 5.5 approved by resolution of the Council:

5.8 Invoices outstanding for more than 3months

Nil

6. FINANCE BUSINESS

6.1 Draft Budget 2019/2020

A dispensation had been granted for all members to discuss the Budget

The Budget had been prepared to include the 10 and 30 Year Maintenance Plans, carefully estimating realistic figures for the forthcoming year, and in line with the recommendations of the Forward Planning Committee, aiming for no more than a 3% increase to the precept. Small savings were made throughout the Budget headings where possible, and these had been used where increases were then required.

Council

£45,214 had been taken from the unallocated Reserves to keep the precept at 2.99%.

Contingencies were increased by £2,275 to £10,000.

The amount allocated for Community Grants was increased by £225 to £7,725.

The amounts for funding under the Service Level Agreements for the Eden Valley Museum Trust (£6,000), Edenbridge Twinning Association (£500) and House Project at the Eden Centre (£7,500) were agreed at the October Grants meeting and included in the Budget.

£5,000 was included in the Capital Fund towards Election expenses.

Costs for the Summer Play Scheme for 2019 had been increased by £150 to £2,000.

The Open Spaces Committee had requested to include £15,000 in this year's budget for a replacement for the Bipper van. There is £13,000 in Depreciation in the Capital Reserves Fund which could be used along with £2,000 from Depreciation in the Revenue Budget. Repairs to the Skate Park surface are expected to be in the region of £3,000, and would also be funded from Depreciation.

The total CIL payments received to date were excluded from the Budget Heading for Council. The RFO is going to look into setting up a separate bank account for CIL funds in the New Year.

Open Spaces

£53,205 was included from the precept under the Open Spaces Budget Heading for the 10 Year Maintenance Plan, with £14,622 being transferred back into the Open Spaces TR Balancing 10 Year Plan for future years. Expenditure for the 10 Year Plan in 2019/20 is £38,583.

£51,130 was included from the precept for the 30 Year Maintenance Plan. £61,190 was also included from Open Spaces 30 Year Maintenance Plan Reserves TR Balancing Fund to cover the total expenditure of £112,320 for the coming year. This includes the Spitals Cross playground works.

5% Contingencies for the Open Spaces 10 year Maintenance Plan was budgeted for.

Staff costs were increased by £10,000 to cover costs for a part time groundsman in the five winter months, provision for possible increases to the middle salary spine points next April, and funding to cover increases which applied to lower salary points last April when the Living Wage was introduced. Proportionate increases to Employers' National Insurance and Employers' Pension contributions have been included.

Utilities were increased to cover rising costs.

Services Budget Heading was reduced as tree maintenance, Churchyard mowing and verti draining now are included in the 10 Year Maintenance Plan. Provision for emptying another dog refuse bin has been included.

Small Projects, Contingencies and Vandalism Budget Headings were all increased by £1000 for the coming year.

The knee high rail (£1,340) at Blossoms Park would come out of Small Projects. A key locked gate at the Recreation Ground (£1,300 - £2,000) could also be funded from Small Projects.

The Equipment Budget was increased by £2,250 to include Billy Goat trolley (£970), Stihl chainsaw (£500), two mowers (£580) and a hedge cutter/pruner (£200) as highlighted in the Asset Register and recommended by the Open Spaces Committee.

A separate Budget Heading for the hanging baskets had been created to remove this expenditure from Materials.

Uplifts to the Street lighting maintenance contract and the energy costs had been included to cover the continuous rising costs.

Costs for a replacement Flail (£5,000) would have to be taken from Council's unallocated Reserves. A Flail had been purchased from Depreciation in 2016 and there is not sufficient in the Depreciation Fund as replacement is now required in advance of its life expectancy.

Cemetery Income had been reduced by £1,000. Income for the Fair is included although it did not happen in July this year.

CCTV was still under investigation and no figures were available so it had not been included in the Budget. Members were reminded they would need to consider where funding would be found if this did go ahead.

Central Services

£11,884 had been included from the precept under the Central Services Budget heading for the 10 Year Maintenance Plan. This year the expected expenditure for the planned Buildings Maintenance on the 10 Year Plan is £19,635. £7,751 will be transferred from the Central Services 10 Year Maintenance Plan Reserves. £15,433 had been included from the precept for the 30 Year Maintenance Plan. This year the expected expenditure for the planned Buildings Maintenance on the 30 Year Plan is £41,000. £25,567 will be transferred from the Central Services 30 Year Maintenance Plan Reserves.

£2,000 was included in Staff Costs for training of new Councillors following the election in May. Provision was also included to cover hand-over period for the Admin Officer next December. Staff costs had also been uplifted to cover increases as a result of Living Wage introduced last April and possible increases next April.

Phone and broadband costs had increased to cover fibre broadband installed last year.

Cleaning costs for Rickards Hall had increased earlier in the year and was included in the Budget. Income for lettings had been reduced due to fewer hours required by pre-school in January 2018 than budgeted for.

Business Rates for Public Toilets apply until April 2020. Salaries for this Budget Heading had increased due to the implementation of the Living Wage.

Emergency Planning

The Emergency Planning budget had been increased by £75 to cover the 5 year radio licence.

Community Warden

This heading is maintained by the Warden Steering Group. The Council agreed to support the post in 2019/20 and had included £7,000 in the precept with a management fee of £2,625 to be paid to the Council. Members

Resolved: to propose the Draft Budget to January Council resulting in the precept being £513,234, an increase of £4.19 (2.99%) to £144.33 per Band D household. The Tax Base had increased slightly to 3556.04 for 2019/20. Members wished to record their thanks to Cllr Scholey, the Clerk and RFO for their hard work in preparing the Draft Budget.

6.2 Gatwick Airport's Masterplan Consultation

The Clerk at Chiddingstone Parish Council had approached Cllr Pearman regarding funding a leaflet drop to residents in connection with Gatwick Airport's Masterplan Consultation. Members noted the Chairman of the Council had authorised a payment of £150 to be made.

6.3 Kent Community Domestic Abuse Programme (Kent CDAP)

The Community Safety Manager at Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) had advised the Council of the above programme and was seeking funding from Parish and Town Councils. Members

Resolved: that the RFO should contact SDC requesting more information on what the programme is, its size and to advise at the next meeting.

6.4 Council's Investment

Members were reminded the Council had a fixed term investment of £250,000 with Lloyds due to mature on 10 January 2019, and a further £50,000 due to mature on 13 February. Members were reminded the first half of the precept would be received at the end of April and

Resolved: to invest £150,000 with Lloyds for 6 months at a rate of approximately 1.00%.

7. FINANCE CORRESPONDENCE

7.1 Thank you letters for Grants

Thank you letters had been received from Edenbridge Voluntary Transport Services and West Kent Mediation. Both organisations were very grateful to members and wished to express their appreciation. The letters are available with the plans for members to view.

7.2 Charity Commission News

Members were advised the latest copy of Charity Commission News was available on the following website: ccnews@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

8. PRESS RELEASE

There were no items on the agenda for which members wished to issue a press release.

The meeting closed at 8.31pm