

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH JANUARY, 2016

Present: Councillor S Cudlip (Chair) and
Councillors Mrs M R Baird, E Bell,
Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn Snr,
B Burn Jnr, I Paul, C Snowball, B Taylor,
R Whitehead, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors Mrs H Cahill, Mrs S Forster,
K Shaw

Observer: Councillor R Arthur

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 1ST DECEMBER, 2015

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

3. PAYSHEET NUMBER 9 - 2015/2016

3.1 Expenditure

RECOMMENDED:

(i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 9 – 2015/2016 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, BACS and cheque payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £95,958.22 being the total sum authorised under this Paysheet. In discussion questions were raised concerning:

- Expenditure in respect of High Performance Door Solutions of £1,002.60 and the Committee was informed that this had been incurred for repairs to the automatic sliding doors at the entrance to the Town Hall. An alternative type of door to be considered as this type of door mechanism is proving to be unreliable and costly to repair.

- Expenditure in respect of Benfield Ford of £49.82 detailed as glass repair – transit. The Committee was informed that the exact details of the repair were unavailable at this time but after investigation the relevant details would be reported to the Member making the enquiry.
- (ii) that the BACS authorisation sheet be signed by three Members and the credit transfers be actioned immediately;
- (iii) that the cheques relating to suppliers not being paid by BACS be signed by three Members and the payments be released immediately; and
- (iv) that the Clerk's Imprest Account be reimbursed the sum of £1,926.11 for Civic Expenditure, and authority be granted for this to be signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer.

3.2 Income

RECOMMENDED the summary sheet showing the range of income received by the Council during the current month be accepted.

3.3 Bank Balances

The Committee considered a statement of Bank Balances held by the Council at the month end, a copy of which had been previously circulated. The Chair examined statements in respect of the Town Council's three bank accounts which were made available to view and the Finance Officer responded to queries raised.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information and approve the Finance Officer's report.

4. APPLICATION FOR GRANT

4.1 Durham Cathedral

The Committee considered an application from Durham Cathedral who sought a grant of £250 towards the costs in the operation of their metalwork exhibition: Preparing the artefacts.

RECOMMENDED Durham Cathedral is advised that the Council is unable to offer a grant on this occasion.

5. SEAHAM TOWN HALL – BOOKINGS

RECOMMENDED the schedule which detailed the bookings made in respect of the Town Hall for December, 2015, together with Income and Expenditure be noted.

6. BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDED the reports of the Budget Sub-Committee meetings held on 17th November, 2015 and 2nd December, 2015 previously circulated to Councillors to aid in the budget setting process, be adopted.

7. REVISED BUDGET FOR 2015/16 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2016/17

The Committee reviewed the estimates for all services, a copy of which had been previously circulated. These outlined revised budgets for the current financial year and the proposed estimates for the next financial year covering all income and expenditure issues.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the budgets for 2016/2017 and the revised budgets for 2015/2016.

8. SETTING THE PRECEPT

RECOMMENDED that the Council hereby agree to precept upon Durham County Council for the sum of £1,019,382 in respect of their requirements for the next financial year, namely 2016/17 to levy a 2% increase to taxpayers and authority be granted for the precept notice to be signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk.

9. AUDIT ISSUES

9.1 Internal Audit Report - Cemeteries Income

The Committee considered the findings of the Internal Auditor in relation to the work undertaken in examining the Town Council's Cemeteries Income arrangements, a copy of which had been previously circulated.

RECOMMENDED the Council accept the report.

10. RISK ASSESSMENTS – FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES ISSUES

The Council was reminded of the requirement as part of the corporate governance processes for risk assessments to be undertaken in relation to various activities. At regular intervals Members had been provided with reports on progress made in this area and the Committee was advised of the process involved in carrying out initial assessments made of risks in a range of finance and general purposes activities. The Committee noted the process followed in assessing the risks.

RECOMMENDED the Council formally agree to accept the risk assessments covering the various items now reported.

11. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED the Council note that no press opportunities existed from this meeting.