



FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.

Wednesday 19th December 2018

The Old Courthouse, Burgage, Southwell

Present: Cllrs Handley (Chairman), P Rainbow, B Prentice, P Brooker, D Martin
In attendance: T Broughton – Clerk to the Town Council

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Cllr Gregory (Personal)

AGREED **Proposed Cllr Handley, Seconded Cllr Prentice**
To accept the apologies from Cllr Gregory
Unanimous

- 2 Questions from members of the Public**

None.

- 3 To Receive any declarations of interest**

Members are hereby reminded that, under the provisions of sections 26-34 and Schedule 4 of the Localism Act 2011, a member with a Disclosable pecuniary interest of which they are aware in a matter who attends a meeting of the council at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

No declarations of interest were made.

- 4. Chairman's announcements**

Newark & Sherwood District Council would like to remind any members of the council in two months arrears of council tax that they cannot vote on the precept.

- 5 To approve previous minutes dated Wednesday 31st October 2018**

5.1 Matters arising and Chairman's announcements– for information only.

AGREED **Proposed Cllr Handley, Seconded Cllr Rainbow**
Minutes dated 31st October 2018 were approved as a true record.
Unanimous

6 Finance Matters

6.1 Income & Expenditure Report to 30th November 2018 –

6.2 Reserves Position – previously circulated.

6.3 Payments

The Income and Expenditure Report was not available for the meeting.

AGREED

Proposed Cllr Handley, Cllr Prentice

All members of the committee approved the payments and the Reserves positions as tabled in the reports.

Unanimous

7 Precept Recommendations

2019/20 Budget Process and Recommendations to Full Council

- Members discussed the Budget process and the issues that had arisen.
- All Members of the Council had at the outset been invited to submit their own Budget proposals, and had been invited to all meetings of the Working Party.
- It was recalled that the first Working Party meeting had agreed the broad parameters of continuing services and also sheltering the residents from inflationary pressures. Efficiencies and cost savings had been reviewed such that the objectives should be targeted to be achieved within a 2% rise in Precept.
- Significant budget pressures have become apparent:
It has become clear that the resource and cost of assuming 'devolution' of operations from N&SDC had previously been significantly underestimated. Also, some degree of up-front payment had been secured for input to reserves for future liabilities; again this was proving to have been insufficient.
Specific items of future cost/reserve pressures were identified as:
Tree maintenance, including adjacent Potwell Dyke grasslands; Riverside community orchard, absence of volunteers leading to increased STC activity and pruning costs; possible additional litter bins; potential significant expenditure on devolved car parks and car park adjacent Leisure Centre; future provision for maintaining new play/open areas once S106 funds are expended.
- There are increased staff costs due to adoption of the Real Living Wage, and anticipated increase in April 2019. We have a good team, and more bedding down of current duties is needed.
- Car parking charges have been held in the interests of the vibrancy and vitality of the Town centre; the important principle of '2 hours free parking' was affirmed.
- Good progress had been achieved in reserving £120000 for the flood mitigation schemes; other reserves should be realigned best to provide for areas anticipated to need spend.
- The potential for increasing Precept further was discussed. The coming year can be financed, and it has to be stressed that 'living within the budget' has to be the norm. There are funds available in reserves for real emergencies, and non-essential expenditure must be curtailed.
Therefore the recommendation is to stick to the original parameters, subject to an important exercise to be commissioned as 7.9 below.

- There was agreement that a more fundamental review was required of the Council's finances, linked to its strategic way forward; this would be an important long-term strategic review, as compared with the previous approach of a 'simple' annual budget exercise.

The exercise should be undertaken by the Way Forward Group.

It should consider:

All current and anticipated operations;

Any identified additional needs;

The principles around supporting the viability and vitality of the Town centre, and tourism;

Opportunities regarding income from CIL and Section 106, in particular the ability, for example, to invest CIL in flood prevention schemes, thereby releasing an element of current reserve for R&R;

All owned assets;

7.1

AGREED

Proposed Cllr Martin Seconded Cllr Rainbow

A precept of £216500 be recommended in respect of 2019/20, being £75.36 for the equivalent of a Band D property and a 1.94% increase on last year.

Unanimous

7.2

AGREED

Proposed Cllr Rainbow, Seconded Cllr Martin

The Income and Expenditure Budget as per Appendix A be recommended.

Unanimous

7.3

AGREED

Proposed Cllr Rainbow, Seconded Cllr Martin

Reserves realignment is recommended per Appendix B

Unanimous

7.4

AGREED

Proposed Cllr Prentice, Seconded Cllr Handley

Further specific salary recommendations from the next HR panel due to meet in early January 2019 be taken to Full Council on 16th January 2019

Unanimous

AGREED

Proposed Cllr Handley, Seconded Cllr Martin

To recommend the writing of an additional 'Budget' newsletter for the Bramley Newspaper as soon as possible after the January 2019 Full Council Meeting. Chairman of the Council, Chairman F&S, Vice Chairman F&S and Clerk be delegated to write.

Unanimous

AGREED

Proposed Cllr Martin Seconded Cllr Prentice

That a 'Budget Report' be submitted to the January Council Meeting.

Unanimous

AGREED

Proposed Cllr Brooker Seconded Cllr Prentice

The Way Forward Group initiate a project to consider the strategic financial policy of the Council, including.

All current and anticipated operations;

Any identified additional needs;

The principles around supporting the viability and vitality of the Town centre, and tourism;

Opportunities regarding income from CIL and Section 106, in particular the ability, for example, to invest CIL in flood prevention and other schemes, thereby releasing an element of current reserve for R&R;

All owned assets

Unanimous

Committee Members thanked the Clerk and Staff for their good work in preparing the budget recommendations and drawing issues to their attention.

9. Items for communication – None at this time

10. Date of next meeting – 13th February 2019 at 1900 (Cllr Prentice noted apologies)

11. Items for discussion at the next meeting

The meeting closed at 20.27

Signed:..... Date:.....