

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 25 November 2013 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, C Butterfield, C Osborne (Chairman), M Pettitt, M Runchman, M Scott, D Sharman, R Smith, S Walsh and G White

In attendance: Cllrs J Ali, W Jackson, S Sutton and the Town Clerk.

Absent: None

1 Apologies for absence (50-2013/2014)

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations (51-2013/2014)

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensations.

3 Minutes of previous meeting (52-2013/2014)

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 14 October 2013 which had previously been circulated as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Financial Reports (53-2013/2014)

- i) **RESOLVED** to note a report of performance against budget for the year 2013/14. The Town Clerk was asked to check on a number of possible miscodings and to clarify whether the tool shed in the cemetery affected the rates. (Both items to be reported to the committee at a later date.)
- ii) The mid-year visit of the internal auditor had taken place Tuesday 12 November 2013 but the report had not been received at the time of the meeting. The Town Clerk noted that the auditor had asked for sight of a bank statement which was still outstanding from Santander and this was the likely cause of the delay.

5 Policy Matters (54-2013/2014)

- i) **RESOLVED** to note the publication of new Model Standing Orders by NALC and to instruct the Town Clerk to work through the new model highlighting any changes and to bring a report back to PF&R Committee before the end of the current financial year.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to circulate the Town Council's current Council's Environmental Policy which was due for review to all members of

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the committee and to work through this policy at the next available meeting.

- iii) **RESOLVED** to note that revision of the Council's Community Engagement Statement was still outstanding and to circulate the statement to all members to be revised at a future committee meeting.
- iv) Further potential amendments to the Council's existing committee structure and scheme of delegations of Sandy Town Council were discussed. Opinion was divided on the merits of further changes to the current arrangements but it was noted that the issue had been reviewed twice quite recently and no further action was proposed.

6 **First Draft of Revenue Budget (55-2013/2014)**

A first draft of the revenue budget for Sandy Town Council for the year 2014/15 has been prepared together with a set of notes.

The Chairman noted that there had been two budget workshops and all but four members had been able to attend at least one of these. There were 13 members present at the meeting and it was hoped that all would make a full contribution to the budget document. The Chairman highlighted the fact that the first draft did not include any allowance for contingencies or any contributions to enhance reserves and this still left a gap of £21,493 between anticipated income and expenditure.

The draft document was scrutinized line by line and discussed in detail. (Cllr Walsh left the meeting.) The Clerk was instructed to ask CBC whether it would adopt any of the Town Council's footway lighting and to establish the impact on the rates of ceasing to hold the Friday market but continuing to hold occasional specialist markets.

RESOLVED to amend item 4227 Land Agent and Legal Fees from £2,000 to £1,000

RESOLVED to amend item 4652 Cemetery Footpaths and Maintenance from £2,000 to £1,000

RESOLVED to amend 7320 Santander Interest from £2,800 to £3,000

RESOLVED to amend 6189 Reserve fund income from £0 to £15,000 to represent income transferred from the commuted sum earmarked in the reserves for the maintenance of Fallowfield.

(Cllr Smith left the meeting.)

Following extensive discussion of CCTV costs and the value of CCTV surveillance it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Town Council that it explored the possibility of withdrawing from its current contract for CCTV surveillance which if followed up would entail giving 6 months' notice to CBC. It was further **RESOLVED** to write to Bedfordshire Police, The Police and Crime Commissioner and Alistair Burt MP to seek

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their views about CCTV provision at the same time a news release would be issued asking for the views of the public. (Cllr Butterfield left the meeting.)

The Chairman advised that the resolutions made had reduced the gap in the budget to the sum of £3,793 but this still relied upon a 13% increase in precept and did not include a contribution to reserves from where any contingency funds must also be drawn.

7 Future Capital Expenditure (56-2013/2014)

Future capital expenditure for Sandy Town Council together with medium term financial planning objectives were discussed. It was agreed that replacement of the Skoda vehicle was a priority but that garaging of a new vehicle was a problem given the current condition and size of the depot garages. Refurbishment of the depot was linked with the cemetery extension and it was important to make progress with this before making decisions about new garage provision. The Clerk was asked to explore rented garaging provided by Aragon Housing Association.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Town Council that a minimum of 5% of the annual precept should be set aside for capital projects and earmarked as such in the general reserve.