



ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

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Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee, 18 January 2022 DRAFT NOTES

Present:

Cllr Samantha Bowring	Chair
Cllr Rawda Jehanli	Chair of Community Advisory committee
Cllr Gabby Barody	Chair of Environment & Amenities Advisory committee
Cllr Andrew Skinner	Chair of Town Infrastructure Advisory committee
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Jim Halliday	

In attendance:

Andy Crick	Committee Clerk
Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Susan Whipp	Deputy Town Clerk / RFO (clerk to the meeting)

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

FG46. Apologies

Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom gave her apologies before the meeting.

FG47. Declarations of interest

Cllr Samantha Bowring declared her position as a trustee of Abingdon Carousel (large grant recipient).

FG48. Statements and Questions from the Public

None

FG49. Minutes

The notes of the meetings of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee of 27 October 2021 and of 23 November 2021 were approved and would be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

In reference to minute reference FG37, 23 November 2021, Cllr Halliday asked for an update on the quote for the wi-fi upgrade works to the Old Magistrates Court. The Town Clerk confirmed that the quote had been received and he would advise Cllr Halliday of the cost by email.

FG50. Forward Plan and Actions Register

The committee reviewed the outstanding actions on the Forward Plan. It was noted that item 7, Guildhall management, is now within the responsibility of the Community advisory committee, as per the Terms of Reference.

The committee reviewed and noted the actions register:

Consultation on Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) policy

The Committee requested that the Town Clerk report to the next meeting regarding a potential time slot for a policy on consultations to be drafted, considered and approved.

With specific reference to the consultation on the CIL Policy, Cllr Halliday asked when the next review of the policy was due. The Town Clerk believed the review of this policy would be on a two-year cycle, implying that this policy should be reviewed in time for approval in February 2023. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would confirm the review date.

FG51. Covid Response Working Group

The notes of the Covid Response Working Group meetings of 6 December 2021 and 10 January 2022 were noted. The Vice-Chair of the group, Cllr Barody, commented that local Covid-19 cases remain high and it is therefore intended to continue to meet monthly.

FG52. Management accounts

The committee received, considered, and recommended to the Town Council that the management accounts from 1 April 2021 to 31 November 2021 be approved.

FG53. Finance report

The committee received, considered and recommended to the Town Council that the list of payments made between 1 November 2021 and 31 December 2021 be approved.

The committee noted that, as per a request from the council's internal auditor, the petty cash balances had been verified by a member of this committee, Cllr Halliday. The committee also noted that Cllr Halliday had checked and verified the bank reconciliation control is working effectively. The committee thanked Cllr Halliday for taking the time to do so.

FG54. **2022-23 Estimates**

The committee received and considered a report from the Deputy Town Clerk / RFO:

Year-end projected outturn

The committee noted the projected year end outturn, acknowledging that it was likely there would be no use of the general reserve required.

Fees and charges

The committee considered the proposed fees and charges as per APPENDIX B of the report. Members acknowledged that any increases should be kept minimal, with a higher than inflation rise required for the Monday and commercial markets to reflect the additional costs the council now incurs in relation to market management. Cllr Halliday commented that he found the three-year comparative useful contained in the appendix and requested that this continues in future years.

Members allowances

The committee acknowledged the recommendation from the independent remuneration panel but agreed that 20% of the district council's basic allowance should continue as the basis for the town council allowance.

Members agreed that any reimbursement for members' travel should remain in line with HMRC rates.

Mayoral allowance

The committee agreed that the mayoral allowance and local arrangement regarding the deputy mayor should remain the same.

2022-23 estimates for this committee

The committee considered the officer recommendation for those service areas under the control of this committee. It was noted that the revised governance arrangements have resulted in a larger budget for this committee than the previous finance (Finance and General Purposes) committee.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Barody, and recommended that a net expenditure budget of £1,265,805 as per the breakdown at appendix C of the report, be approved.

2022-23 estimates for full council

The committee considered the recommendations which had been received from the other spending committees. It was noted that appendix C of the report was issued ahead of the meeting of the Town Infrastructure advisory committee, and the recommendation from that committee contained two additional items (CCTV contribution £8,346 and speed indicator signs £15,000). With these additions, the

committee agreed that a net expenditure requirement of £1,830,659 should be recommended for approval.

2022-23 funding of net expenditure

The committee then considered how to fund the requirement. It was acknowledged that the Environment and Amenities advisory committee had suggested that £60,000 assigned in the draft budget to play area improvements would meet the council's criteria for the use of CIL monies. The use of CIL monies (or grant funding) had also been suggested by the Town Infrastructure advisory committee to fund the speed indicator signs, at a cost of £15,000. Taking these two recommendations into account it was agreed to recommend that £75,000 be funded from CIL and the remaining £1,755,659 be funded by way of precept. If this was approved by council, this would mean an estimated band D council tax annual charge of £141.76 (compared to £140.60 for the current year).

The Chair, Cllr Bowring thanked the Deputy Town Clerk / RFO for her work on calculating these estimates.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Skinner, and recommended to council:

- (i) That the year-end projections as set out in paragraphs 6.1 to 6.3 and appendix A of the report of the Deputy Town Clerk/ RFO, be noted
- (ii) That the fees and charges as set out in paragraph 6.4 and appendix B the report be approved subject to amending the charge to commercial markets including the regular Monday market (but excluding the Farmers' Market) for 2022/23 to £12.00 per 10ft pitch, to reflect the increased management costs incurred by the town council as a result of duties transferring from the traders to the council.
- (iii) That the report of the district council remuneration panel dated December 2020 and received 11 January 2022, be noted.
- (iv) That Members' allowances for 2022/23 be approved as follows:
 - (a) £1,117 per member, resulting in an overall budget of £21,223, this being based on 20% of a district councillor's basic allowance as in previous years
 - (b) That travel and subsistence expenses be payable to members in relation to duties incurred outside the parish, payable at the national HMRC rates
 - (c) That a mayoral allowance of £3,500 be paid, noting that by local arrangement the mayor allocates £500 of this allowance to the deputy mayor to recognise duties undertaken on their behalf.
- (v) That estimates for 2022/23 as detailed in the report from paragraphs 6.10 to 6.23 and in the associated appendices be noted and that the net expenditure requirement for the council for 2022/23 be agreed as £1,807,313 (this including all the items detailed in paragraph 6.11) plus the following amendments recommended by the town infrastructure advisory committee to that committee's draft budget, which was considered on 13 January 2022):

- (a) Support for CCTV in Abingdon – £8,346
- (b) Speed indicator devices – £15,000

If this is agreed, then the revised net expenditure requirement is £1,830,659

(vi) That the net expenditure budget for 2022/23 be funded as follows:

Precept £1,755,659
Grant funding and use of CIL £75,000

(vii) That subject to the above the report of the Deputy Town Clerk/ RFO, be approved.

FG55. Investment Strategy

The committee received and considered a report from the Deputy Town Clerk / RFO.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that there were no recommended substantial changes to the policy, with all changes relating to the change in governance arrangements only.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Halliday, and recommended that the investment strategy as contained in appendix B of the report be approved.

FG56. Property Matters

The committee received and considered a report from the Properties Officer. The report was noted and the Chair, Cllr Bowring, thanked the Properties Officer for her ongoing work.

FG57. Document, information and data retention and disposal policy

The committee received and considered a report from the Town Clerk which contained a draft policy on this matter.

The Town Clerk explained that most council reports were retained on the council's IT server, with approved ('grey') minutes being printed and retained as paper copies.

The committee considered whether the policy should be expanded to include information on which documents should be retained as part of council archives. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would consult with the council's archivist, Mrs. Jackie Smith and a suitable list could then be included as an appendix to the policy.

The Chair, Cllr Bowring, thanked the Town Clerk for drafting this policy.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Halliday, and recommended that the document, information and data retention and disposal policy be approved.

FG58. Community Governance Review

The committee received and considered a report from the Town Clerk.

Members considered the number of town councillors (currently 19) and did not recommend that any changes be considered in the review.

Members acknowledged that the current housing developments in the north of the town will mean an increase in the number of residents included in the Dunmore, Peachcroft and Fitzharris Wildmoor wards and so it requested that the district council be asked to review the distribution of membership between wards, within the context of a council membership of 19. This was provided for within the government [guidance](#) on conducting community governance reviews which stated that reviews should take account of 'change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts'.

With regard to the town boundaries, members suggested that one area could be considered for a change. The town clerk would contact the clerk of the parish concerned to explore this and would report back directly to the council meeting on 26 January. This could potentially result in a proposal to amend the recommendation detailed below. As a principle, the Town Clerk stated that any proposals to change boundaries with neighbouring parishes should always be discussed with those parishes before being included in any request to the district council.

Members considered the name of the council and agreed that no recommendations be put forward.

It was recommended that:

- 1. The report of the town clerk be noted.**
- 2. The district council be thanked for consulting the town council in relation to the community governance review and be advised that the town council requests that the review considers the distribution of the council's 19 members across the wards to reflect the change in the number or distribution of the electors which is likely to occur in the period of five years beginning with the day when the review starts.**

FG59. Publicity

Members put forward the following suggestions for officer to consider:

- If approved, the council's contribution to the improvements to the CCTV in the town
- Once approved, the 2022-23 budget and funding

FG60. Meetings for 2020/21 future meetings

The dates for future meetings of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee were noted:

22 March 2022

21 June 2022

FG61. Exclusion of the public, including the press

The Chair moved that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

FG62. Confidential Actions Register

The confidential actions register was noted.

FG63. Recommendations from the Environment and Amenities advisory committee 16 November 2021

The committee received and considered two recommendations from the Environment and Amenities advisory committee:

EA33. Community woodland

EA35. Play equipment

It was recommended to council that these be approved, as per the details in the confidential appendix to the minutes of the Environment and Amenities advisory committee of 16 November 2021.

FG64. Confidential appendix to the minutes 23 November 2021

The committee received and considered the confidential appendix to the minutes of the committee meeting held on 23 November 2021.

The appendix was approved as a correct record.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm