



Minutes of the Council Affairs and Finance Committee of the Democratic Services held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 19:00 at The Bungalow, 8 North Street, Credition, EX17 2BT

Present: Cllrs Liz Brookes-Hocking, Steve Huxtable, Rachel Backhouse, Jim Cairney, Guy Cochran and Giles Fawssett

Apologies: Cllrs Joyce Harris and Frank Letch

In Attendance: 2 members of the public

Minute Taker: Rachel Avery

MINUTES

116 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Questions were raised by two members of the public. The questions and full responses would be provided on the town council's website in due course.

117 APOLOGIES

It was **resolved** to accept apologies from Cllrs Harris and F Letch. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran).

118 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no declarations of interest.

119 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no amendments to the order of business.

120 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

121 COUNCIL AFFAIRS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

It was **noted** that the minutes would be considered and approved at the February meeting.

122 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

It was **noted** that the document provided useful action plans, although the process had been lengthy and expensive, and would be useful in ensuring the town council can communicate more widely and effectively.

It was **resolved** adopt the Communications Strategy. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

123 FINANCE

123.1 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE TRANSACTIONS BETWEEN 01 DECEMBER 2023 AND 31 DECEMBER 2023

It was **resolved** to approve transactions between 01 December 2023 and 31 December 2023. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

123.2 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE BANK RECONCILIATION TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

It was **resolved** to receive and approve the bank reconciliation to 31 December 2023. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

123.3 TO NOTE BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

It was **resolved** to note bank account balances to 31 December 2023. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

124 BUDGET 2024/25

Consideration was given to the proposed draft budget and precept request.

The following comments were made by members:

- The increase represented 7p to the town council in each pound of council tax paid
- As 2024/25 progresses, a devolution deal for Devon will be consulted on. The town council needs to be prepared to take on services. Where there is a lack of funding elsewhere, there needs to be a choice as to whether the town council can take on responsibility, creating a financially resilient community

- The town council is open to criticism with precept increases, but communicating the need for increases and where money will be spent will be important
- That at least an inflationary increase was required to continue current delivery, noting that some members were reluctant to increase the precept at all and others preferring to see a much larger increase.

It was **resolved** to recommend option C to Full Council for approval. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking, Cllr Backhouse abstained from voting).

125 REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF POLICIES

Eye Test Policy – It was **resolved** to approve the policy. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

Disciplinary Policy – It was requested to obtain clarification as to whether an employee can have a legal representative attend meeting. It was resolved to defer approval to the February meeting. (Proposed by Cllr Cochran).

Grievance Policy – It was **resolved** to approve the policy. (Proposed by Cllr Fawssett).

Maternity, Adoption and Paternity Policy – It was **resolved** to approve the policy. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

Motion Request Form – It was **resolved** to approve the policy. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

126 DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL BANKING ARRANGEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM REQUESTED BY CLLR FAWSETT)

Cllr Fawssett advised that the Pension Fund is vast, and the use of ethical banking is integral. However, there are few ethical banks available and he would continue to obtain further information on which banks all local authorities are using.

Thanks were extended to Cllr Fawssett for acting on this.

127 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting, Tuesday 13 February 2024, was noted.

128 PART II

It was resolved to move into Part II. (Proposed by Cllr Brookes-Hocking).

SH

129 COUNCIL OFFICES

Cllr Brookes-Hocking declared an interest and left the room

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update.

130 REPORTS PACK

Signed 

Dated *26 Mar 24*