

REPORT OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING 15TH NOVEMBER 2016

MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

- Chair:** * Jane White
- Councillors:** * Tony Edwards
* Rodney Kipps
* Raj Khiroya
Alison Preedy
* Steve Watkins

*Denotes members present

- Officers Present:** * Yvonne Merritt – Clerk
* Claire James – Deputy Clerk

There were no members of the public present

16/27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There was one apology for absence from Cllr Alison Preedy .

16/28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest

16/29 REVISED BUDGET 2016/17

The Chair explained that the costs associated with the Community Plan were made up purely of printing and delivery costs. £1000 sponsorship had been obtained towards the costs, but it was a source of disappointment that Government funding had stopped towards the scheme.

Mapping System: The Chair questioned the underspend on the mapping system. The Clerk advised that this was due to a misunderstanding on the makeup of the initial costs. It had been understood that there was an annual rental for the system whereas in fact the system was purchased and there was a smaller maintenance charge each year plus ad hoc assistance with specific map requests. A budget in the order of £750 - £1000 was therefore more realistic.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To agree the revised budgets.

16/30 BUDGET STRATEGY 2017/18

The Chair clarified the wording in the budget strategy paper para 7.4 and asked if all Members were happy that they understood what a revenue budget was which the Clerk then explained. It was noted that there would be no revenue grant from the District this year. The District had given notice to Parishes three years

previously and had reduced it down proportionally over the period. This therefore meant that there was a £7K reduction in income. The Chair then asked for each Members views on the strategy that should be put in place for 2017/18. Specific questions were asked with respect to whether Members wanted to replenish reserves in line with auditors recommendations, run with the existing deficit or go further into deficit noting the audit requirement that reserves held at a level equal to 50% of the precept. It was noted that nothing was formally agreed yet at District level with respect to the Tax Base. It was suggested that the Community Plan had been completed which parishioners would now expect to see some action on. The Clerk advised that she had received notice that the Government had charge capped 12 parishes and although this was out of 9,000 it was understood that they would be looking at the possibility of charging capping all parishes within the next two years. She suggested that Members might like to be mindful of this when agreeing the strategy. Several expressed the view that the Council needed to be accountable to the Community. There was a general consensus that a rise in line with inflation was justifiable and reducing the Reserves deficit to zero over two years to be in line with Auditors recommendations made sense. At the same time ways of cutting costs or increasing income should be looked at. The Clerk advised a couple of positive effects on the budget in the form of the Hollybush letting which increased revenue on the halls by about 35% and would negate the need for the Parish to subsidise the Halls. Additionally all the halls except the War Memorial are now below the threshold for paying business rates. It was noted that the additional Ranger costs would be offset by some of these gains.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the budget strategy for 2017/8 would be a 2% increase in line with RPI and that the shortfall in the reserves be replenished over a two year period.

This was proposed from the Chair and carried unanimously.

With respect to the allocated Capital Reserves it was noted that the amount being put away for elections was likely to fall short of the amount required based on the costs of the last by election. It was also noted that if another by election took place in the next 18 months, the reserved amount would be wiped out. Although costs may be shared for the council elections in 2018 with either County or District, this could not be quantified at this stage. It was therefore noted that P&R would put a bid in for Elections reserves to be increased.

16/31 CHORLEYWOOD IN BLOOM – MAIN AND NEW PARADE

It was noted that the Chorleywood in Bloom project had been such a success that residents were now asking when the group would be taking on the improvement of Main and New Parade flower beds in the Village. It had reached the stage where the working group needed guidance from the Council on how they wished to move forward and number of options were presented to Members and discussed. It was noted that not only were there set up costs but any solution needed to be future proof in terms of impact on the resources of the Council. It was also complicated by the ownership of the land in question resting with Herts County, maintenance being carried out by TRDC and many utilities running under the land in question limiting what could be done with the area.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Council was not in a position to commit further time and resources at this time but would actively encourage and support the Residents Association or any other organisation wish to take on the project

This was proposed by Cllr Tony Edwards, seconded by Cllr Steve Watkins and carried unanimously.

16/32 CLOSURE

The meeting having started at 7.30 pm, finished at 8.40 pm

These minutes have been checked by the Chairman.

Signatureagreed via email..... Date.....22nd November 2016.....

These minutes were agreed as a true and correct record at the Policy & Resources meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Signature Date