

KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee Remote meeting held on Tuesday
8 September 2020 at 6.30pm via Zoom.

PRESENT: Councillors D Biddleston (Part) T Crouch, C Fricker, A Halliday,
H MacFie (Chair) and B Simmons

IN ATTENDANCE: Cheryl Scott – Town Clerk/RFO

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Cooper.

RESOLVED:

To receive apologies for absence.

42. The Chairman lost connection.

RESOLVED

Cllr Crouch assumed the Chair until the Chairman's connection was restored.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

44. DISPENSATIONS

None requested.

45. RESOLVED

To defer item 4 (Records of previous meetings) until the Chairman's connection was restored.

46. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

47. TOWN COUNCIL APPLICATION FOR COVID SMALL BUSINESS GRANT

The Clerk provided an update – the Council had been refused as the Town Council offices had a rateable value of £51,000. However, the Clerk had also submitted on behalf of Burnett and the Cemetery Chapel. Property and Services had indicated to the Deputy Town Clerk that the decision was being reviewed. The Clerk was intending to write to seek clarification.

RESOLVED

To note the above.

48. The Chairman's connection was restored. Cllr Crouch vacated the Chair in favour of the Chairman.

49. RECORD OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Finance Cttee meeting held on 14th July 2020 (previously circulated) be confirmed as a true record and signed in front of the camera by the Chairman.

50. QUOTATION FROM INTERNAL AUDITOR

As per the request to the Internal Auditor, a quotation is provided for Internal Audit services this coming financial year to include for a second interim visit. As the additional visit was not budgeted for, the money will need to come from General Reserves. The Cttee were also asked to consider the subject matter for the requested training in order that a further quote could be provided.

RECOMMENDATION TO TON COUNCIL

That a second interim visit from the Internal Auditor be agreed at an additional cost of £425.

51. REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE

The Clerk advised this matter was no longer urgent and could await the Town Council meeting on 22nd September.

RESOLVED

To refer the matter to Town Council on 22nd September.

52. TELEPHONE/BROADBAND CONTRACTS

(a) The Cttee considered a report containing alternative proposals for supply of broadband and telephony services following cancellation of the Council's telephony contract effective from 1st October. The Clerk explained that the Council's main number was actually several numbers and therefore could not be ported by Talk Talk as part of the broadband contract. Therefore in order to ensure that both outgoing and incoming calls could occur simultaneously on the one number, the Council would need to replace the current PABX telephone supplier with either similar or move to digital VOIP systems.

(b) The Cttee noted when comparing the VOIP suppliers that although the preferred supplier was not local and therefore scored lower on its green credentials, it was the national company offering its own software that was used throughout the world(GoToConnect). The other companies were all acting as an intermediary offering third party software packages that were either not so well-known or even bespoke.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO TOWN COUNCIL

(Clerk's note – This will be a separate Agenda Item for Town Council to discuss)

(i) BROADBAND

To continue with Talk Talk at the reduced contract price of £21.95pcm (24 month contract - voice and internet) for all broadband use for the time being.

(ii) PHONE SYSTEM

To change to supplier 4 for a new phone/VOIP contract.

(iii) SWITCH

To source the Switch required to power the new digital phones from SoVision at as cost of £165 plus installation.

Cllr Biddleston joined the meeting.

53. OFFICE REINSTATEMENT INSURANCE CLAIM

The Committee considered the schedule prepared by the Clerk. The matter of rent and rates repayments was currently being addressed with B&NES in the first instance but would still be submitted as part of the Council's claim.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the Schedule of Losses for submission to the loss adjuster.
- (ii) Town Clerk to apprise B&NES Ward Councillor Andy Wait and request assistance in respect of issues with B&NES on rent and rates.

54. TREE MANAGEMENT 3YR AGREEMENT WITH B&NES

The Cttee considered whether to apply specific Key Performance Indicators to the service agreement to provide additional security for the timely execution of the agreement by B&NES. On balance however, the Cttee felt that any performance issues should be addressed at a first year review.

RECOMMENDATION TO TOWN COUNCIL

To approve the agreement without amendments.

55. ANNUAL RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

In accordance with the corporate governance timetable, the Annual Risk Management review presented by the Town Clerk was reviewed and discussed. The Committee noted that several matters arising from last year's assessment had been addressed and that others were in progress by either the Town Clerk or the Personnel Committee. The Clerk had also added risk factors arising out of the COVID pandemic. The Committee also noted the newly identified risk of a breach of Employment and/or Health and Safety Law by Councillors.

RESOLVED

- (i) To approve the Annual Risk Assessment.
- (ii) To review the Council's IT Policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO TOWN COUNCIL

- (i) That all Members of Personnel Committee should receive ACAS training.**
- (ii) That all Councillors should receive training on their role as an Employer.**
- (iii) That all Chairpersons of both Council and Committees should receive training.**

56. The Chairman apologised that he now had to leave the meeting for another engagement.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Crouch assume the Chair.

57. CAPITAL PROJECTS REVIEW PART 1

(a) The Clerk apologised to the Committee that owing to lack of time and resources, she had been unable to progress many of the capital projects that really required attention, some of which had already been carried over from previous years.

The main issues identified that were impeding progress were as follows:

- (i) The senior officers have no spare capacity in their day to day work to devote to progressing these projects – substantial chunks of time are required which it is just not possible to allocate given the current staffing resources.

- (ii) The procurement process involving drawing up a detailed works specification, researching suitable contractors, preparation of formal tender requests and accompanying site visits from prospective contractors is time consuming and will not guarantee contractors will then provide a quotation. E.g. despite several site surveys, the Town Clerk was unable to obtain any quotations for the Manor Rd flat roof last year.
- (iii) the COVID pandemic and lockdown restrictions has meant that capital projects work has been somewhat halted for this financial year to date.

(b) The Clerk was asked to identify the most urgent projects with a view to focusing on them for completion this financial year.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the following projects be progressed as an urgent priority for completion before the end of this year by the Town Clerk
 - a) Manor Rd flat roof replacement
 - b) Chapel Spire and chapel drainage works
- (ii) That capital/repairs projects involving significant sums with drawdowns from CIL or EMR be ascribed separate individual expenditure nominal codes in the budget in future rather than expenditure being included as part of any existing nominal codes referring to annual maintenance expenditure.

RECOMMENDATION TO PERSONNEL CTTEE

That staff capacity should be reviewed with a view to providing the appropriate staff resource required to ensure capital projects can be progressed in a timely fashion.

58. COVID19 CONTINGENCY GRANT FUND – TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- (a) Cllrs Simmons and Biddleston declared personal interests in that as Chair of Keynsham Dial-A-Ride and the Keynsham COVID Community response group respectively, applications from both groups were being put forward for consideration by the Town Council at its next meeting. In view of this they remained for the discussion but did not vote.
- (b) Formal terms and conditions and an application form for the COVID Community Resilience Contingency Fund were considered in advance of applications being considered at the next Town Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION TO TOWN COUNCIL

(Clerk's note – This will be a separate Agenda Item for Town Council to discuss)

- (i) To approve the terms and conditions and Application form.
- (ii) That applications considered at the next Town Council meeting are subject to retrospective completion of the newly approved forms.

59. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the next scheduled Zoom meeting will be held on Tuesday 6th October 2020 at 6.30 p.m.

The meeting finished at 20.53.

SIGNED:..... (Chairman) Dated: