



## **MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **Meeting Details:**

Date: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Time: 10:00 am

Location: Meeting held remotely via video conference under the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020

Chairperson: Cllr. D Unwin

Staff: L Edwards (Town Clerk), D Jones (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO), H Jenkins (Finance & HR Officer)

### **In attendance:**

Cllr. D Unwin

Cllr. A Wathan

Cllr. S Bletsoe

Cllr. I Williams

Cllr. M Blundell-Humphreys

### **1. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr. M Voisey and Cllr. T Wood.

### **2. To receive Declarations of Interests (if any) of Members in respect of the business to be transacted.**

Cllr. D Unwin declared an interest as a member of the Merthyr Mawr Community Council and Cllr. S

Bletsoe declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 - 2021 Mayoral Christmas cards.

### **3. To confirm and sign the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

The Minutes of the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021 were approved as a true and accurate recording of discussions made and duly signed.

### **4. To consider matters arising from the Finance Committee Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

The Deputy Clerk informed Committee of the small increase of £590.20 in the Christmas lighting budget provision for this year which was approved and paid via delegated authority.

**5. To receive 2020/21 Audit update**

The Deputy Clerk informed Committee that an enquiry had been made from the Audit Office for an explanation of variance in cash and investments, and advised that this was due to an underspend on the budget. She advised that the information had been passed to the Audit office, but no response has been received from them yet.

**6. To receive 2021/22 Quarter 3 Budget Review**

Committee were presented with the 2021/22 Quarter 3 Budget review and the Deputy Clerk informed Committee that BCBC had changed gas supply but had failed to inform Bridgend Town Council of the new supplier. The situation is now in hand and the change over to the new gas supplier is currently being undertaken with a back log of invoices due to be submitted.

Committee were informed of the cost to date against the Military Parades budget for Remembrance of £3,734.84 however the Deputy Clerk advised she would check if there were any outstanding invoices, and an update would be presented at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved the 2021/22 Quarter 3 budget.**

**7. To review and approve costs for 2021 Mayors Christmas Card.**

The Deputy Clerk presented quotes to Committee for consideration as the expenditure costs come under section 137 which requires Committee approval. Committee discussed the quotes received and approved that KK Solutions would be invited to print this year's Mayors Christmas cards.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved KK Solutions to print the 2021 Mayors Christmas Cards.**

**8. To review and approve costs for Waste Management Contract.**

The Deputy Clerk referred to 3 quotes sent to Committee for discussion on the provision of a waste and recycling management contract for Carnegie House and the Town Hall. Committee discussed the quotes and approved the appointment of Veolia on a twelve-month contract.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved to award a twelve-month contract to Veolia to commence in January 2022 with the fortnightly Wheelie Bin waste and recycling removal collection to take place initially at Carnegie House until the Town Hall is developed.**

**9. To discuss Craig Y Parcau Woodland management works prior to termination of lease.**

The Chair of Committee referred Members to the letter received from BCBC requesting repairs to be made to four handrails and footpath resurfacing work to be undertaken prior to the termination of the lease. The Chair informed Committee that the Craig-y-Parcau lease had expired in September 2016. The Town Clerk explained that the formal termination of the lease was disputed by BCBC and

advised that the lease rolled over from year to year and BTC were “Sitting Tenants”. The Clerk stated that a Section 27 notice had since been submitted to BCBC which was due to formally terminate the lease at the end of November 2021 which resulted in the letter.

Committee requested that a response should be drafted to the letter received by BCBC querying the requirement of BTC to carry out the works and to clarify if the lease had now formally ended.

**RESOLVED: That the Chair of Committee and Town Clerk liaise to draft a response to BCBC.**

## **10. Town Hall**

### **a) To review and approve revised Town Hall Cost Plan – Phase 1 and agree budget for 2021/22**

Committee were presented with comments from the Architect in relation to the priority of work for Phase 1 proposed by the Town Hall Working Group. After a lengthy discussion, it was proposed that the Town Clerk respond to the architect to request that the tender package is progressed with the following requirements:

- Items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 to be included in the works
- Item 8 – To remove all trip hazards (including cracked and uneven paving slabs etc) to be included for health and safety reasons
- Item 9 – To include the provision of three disabled parking bays in the north carpark by cleaning the moss in the area and painting new lines, along with essential works to the northern gate to provide a clear, safe pedestrian route to the new main entrance.
- Item 11 Mechanical – To include only the mechanical work required in relation to Items 2,3,4,5 and 10 provided that they are essential works required to complete these rooms to current standards and legislation
- Item 12 Electrical – To include only the work required in relation to Items 2,3,4,5 and 10 provided that they are essential works required to complete these rooms to current standards and legislation
- The Council accepts that the Preliminaries and Professional Fees will be a percentage of the overall works.

It was noted that the Finance Committee has an understanding of the budget required for the phase 1 works and will allocate funds over two financial years; 2021/22 and 2022-23

Members were very clear that they do not want to advertise a budget for the project in the tender process. Instead, they want the companies responding to the tender requirements to provide quotes that Council can then consider.

**RESOLVED: Committee requested that the Town Clerk respond to the Architect to finalise the tender package including items 2,3,4,5,8 and 10 plus essential mechanical and electrical work plus a percentage of preliminaries and professional fees but with no stipulation of budget noted within the tender documentation.**

**RESOLVED: That the final tender package will be required to be agreed by full Council prior to being advertised.**

**b) To consider 2022/23 Town Hall Budget**

The Deputy Clerk presented to Committee for consideration the 2022/23 Town Hall budget and the following items were highlighted for deliberation and approval:

Utilities 1620/6 Gas – budget reduced based on existing and forecast spend. **APPROVED**

Water 1620/9 – budget reduced based on existing and forecast spend. **APPROVED**

Building Works 1620/11 – further to discussion of agenda item 10 Members agreed a budget of £100,000 for completion of phase 1 works as per the revised cost plan.

Washroom Facilities – 1620/14 - £1,000 removed with a budget of £500 updated for provision of washroom services. **APPROVED**

Relocation Costs – budget reduced from £5,000 to £1,500 for removal of office furniture from Carnegie House, based on previous contractor costs. **APPROVED**

External Lighting – budget of £3,000 to remain as Committee noted there is no external lighting installed at present **APPROVED.**

Pedestrian Access project – removed from budget and to be included in future years. **APPROVED**

NNDR – Committee noted that costs are high and requested that the Deputy Clerk continue to explore a reduction in rates in relation to empty premises, which had been awarded for three months previously, along with the revaluation of the building for community and office space.

**RESOLVED: To recommend a 2022/23 Town Hall budget of £173,045 and PWLB loan repayment of £37,236.30.**

**11. To consider Grant Aid Applications**

**a) To consider application from Bridgend Sports RFC**

Committee were requested to consider the application for funding for a defibrillator by Bridgend Sports RFC having already raised a sum of £500 themselves.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved the application in principle with further information to be provided by Bridgend Sports RFC as per the application before funding would be released.**

**b) To consider application from Hut 9 Preservation Group**

Committee were presented with a grant aid request for £10,000; it was noted that a 'Go Fund Me' application had been developed and £5,000 had already been raised.

Committee considered the application and the historical importance of the project and agreed in principle a small contribution of £500 dependent on further information being received as per the application and subject to the sale going ahead.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved the sum of £500 subject to the sale being completed and further information being submitted prior to the funding being released.**

**12. Correspondence**

**a) Letter from BCBC: Net Tax Base and Precept request 2022-23**

Committee noted the letter received from BCBC detailing the precept request for 2022/23; Chair of Committee advised an extension to the deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022 if required.

**b) To consider information received regarding the Bridgend County Borough Council, summer holiday "Active 4 Life" programmes and thereon consider the provision of budget for 2022/23**

The Deputy Clerk informed Committee that BCBC had requested financial support for the 'Active 4 Life' programme for 2022/23 of £3,850 and asked Committee if they wished to consider continuing to support the programme.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved the increase to £3,850 to support the BCBC 'Active 4 Life' programme.**

**c) To consider 2022/23 budget request from Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee**

Committee were presented with the budget request from the Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee which had been discussed in detail and agreed to accept the request.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved the 2022/23 budget request from the Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee.**

**d) To consider 2022/23 budget request from Personnel Committee**

Committee were presented with the budget request from Personnel Committee and approved:

Staff overtime payments – The Deputy Clerk provided Members with an overview of recent overtime expenditure.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved a budget of £10,000 for the 2022/23 financial, it was noted that overtime would be closely monitored.**

Pension Contributions – A budget of £15,000 had been set however the Deputy Clerk advised that the forecast increase and overtime was not included and therefore a figure of £18,000 was considered by Committee.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved the budget increase of Pension contributions to £18,000.**

PAYE and NI contributions – The Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk explained that the PAYE and NI contributions are currently over budgeted for as they already come out of the individual staff budgets, therefore Committee were asked to consider a budget reduction to £5,000

**RESOLVED: Committee approved the reduction to £5,000**

**e) To consider 2022/23 budget request from Facilities Committee**

Committee were presented with the 2022/23 budget request from the Facilities Committee which had been discussed in detail, with the update of the waste and recycling contract to be included in the budget figures.

**RESOLVED: Committee approved the 2022/23 budget request from the Facilities Committee.**

**f) To consider draft budget for 2022/23 and to thereon make recommendations to Council for the Bridgend Town Council 2022/23 budget and precept**

Committee were presented with a draft budget for consideration and the following items were noted:

Staff Costs - **APPROVED**

BTC Printing - £4,000 - **APPROVED**

Office Equipment - £6,500 Carnegie House and the Town Hall budget amalgamated, budget required for additional office furniture and equipment for new employees, Town Hall reception and offices furniture - **APPROVED**

Postage - An increase to £1,500 to cover re-direction costs and increase in stamps - **APPROVED**

Waste and recycling - £600 budget based on quotes provided - **APPROVED**

Insurance - Budget to remain at £15,000, the Town Clerk noted that she is still awaiting a quote for flood insurance - **APPROVED**

Evergreen Hall expenses - Remove from budget - **APPROVED**

Military - reduction in budget to £5,000 - **APPROVED**

Advertising - Remove from budget - **APPROVED**

Contingency - Remain at £17,000 - **APPROVED**

Donations/Grant Aid – Reduction in budget to £7,500 - **APPROVED**

Building Works at Carnegie House – Committee discussed the damp issue needing to be resolved as a high priority with the windows and door replacement to be completed later and agreed for the carry-over of £36,837.57 for the completion of works – **APPROVED**

Civic Activities – budget of £5,000 - **APPROVED**

Members Fees – budget of £1,000 - **APPROVED**

Christmas Grotto – budget of £500 - **APPROVED**

Floral Displays – The Town Clerk informed Committee that she had received an email from Plantscape advising that unfortunately they are withdrawing the provision of flower towers and hanging baskets and therefore unable to provide a quote for 2022/23; they offered the purchase as a one off payment of the empty flower towers and hanging baskets if required. The Deputy Clerk advised that further quotes would be sought and the offer to purchase the towers and baskets passed to the Facilities Committee for review. Budget of £10,000 - **APPROVED**

Landscaping – budget of £1,000 - **APPROVED**

Outdoor Ground Maintenance – A budget required for a contractor to undertake grass cutting, hedge cutting and outdoor ground maintenance at the Town Hall was agreed by Committee of £5,000 - **APPROVED**

Footpaths – budget of £3,000 - **APPROVED**

Freelance Support – Committee agreed to remain as zero with any request for freelance support to come out of the contingency budget.

Carnegie House Programme – **budget of £30,622.50 - APPROVED**

Tree Planting and maintenance – Committee agreed the sum of £10,000 to be put into 2021/22 reserves and a zero-budget set for 2022/23. **APPROVED**

Town Centre Events – £20,000 for large town centre event, War Time Bridgend - **APPROVED.**

Staff Training – budget of £2,920.00 to cover staff training - **APPROVED**

Tourism/Signage – budget of £5,000 to be put back to 2021/22 reserves and a zero-budget set for 2022/23 - **APPROVED**

Regeneration Projects – to be discussed at the Full Town Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Defibrillators – budget to remain of £1,000 - **APPROVED**

Remuneration – budget of £3,500 for payment of up to 7 senior roles - **APPROVED**

Childcare – Committee approved the use of contingency budget should this be needed

Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowance – budget of Mayor allowance £1,500 and Deputy Mayor allowance £500 - **APPROVED**

Website Costs – The Town Clerk informed Committee that content is currently being sent to the web designers with the website being developed in January/February for the launch of the new web site in March 2022. She explained that there was no requirement for further website budget and that hosting and associated on-costs were budgeted for within the Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee.

Town Plan – The Town Clerk informed Committee that although not a legal requirement it is recommended for Town Councils of BTC's size to produce a Town Plan, however due to staff resource it would not be feasible to produce a plan in 2022/23.

**RESOLVED: Committee agreed to defer the development of the Town Plan at the present time.**

Town Hall – budget of £173,000 as per agenda item 10b - **APPROVED**

Interest Repayment – The Deputy Clerk advised that the interest rate over the term of the loan is 2.1% with costs reducing year on year. Chair requested that the PWLB schedule of payments be provided to the Finance Committee at its next meeting for reference.

Heritage Space Development – Committee agreed to place project on hold for next year.

Hybrid Meeting Equipment – The Deputy Clerk highlighted that the provision of hybrid meetings is mandatory therefore asked Committee to consider budgeting for this provision.

**RESOLVED: Committee agreed a £3,000 budget for the projected installation of the hybrid meeting equipment.**

The Chair of Committee thanked both the Deputy Town Clerk/RFO and Town Clerk for the work to produce the draft budget and requested an update on the 2022/23 budget / precept figure based on discussion at this meeting.

The Deputy Clerk informed Committee that the draft precept figure was now £765,887 with an amount of £128,000 being required from general reserves in order to present a zero percent increase on the previous year.

**The Meeting Closed: 12.55 pm**

Signed..... (Chair of Finance Committee)

Date.....