

**GOOLE TOWN COUNCIL**

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 commencing at 7.26pm.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Flynn (In the Chair), Councillor Whitehead took over as Chair when Councillor Flynn lost Signal from Agenda item no. PR1992, Bailey, Boatman, Harrison, B Jeffreys, D Jeffreys, Moiser, Raspin, Turner, and Walker

**OFFICERS:** Mr. B. Robertson (Town Clerk)  
Ms. S. Norfolk (Responsible Finance Officer)  
Mrs C. Brophy (Admin Assistant)

**PR1990      APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bottomley, Head, Marshall, Moore, Penn and Vause.

**PR1991      TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND THEIR NATURE**

No declarations of interest were received.

**PR1992      MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2020 approved at Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2020 be signed as a true record by the Chair (Councillor Flynn).

This was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Walker and **SECONDED** by Councillor Turner.

**PR1993      REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER**

Members were in receipt of the following reports.

(a)      Monthly Payments – November, 2020

Councillor Turner questioned the payment for Covid signs saying he thought they were provided by the Government.

The RFO informed Members that these are additional signs for the building, parks and cemetery which need to be weatherproof.

Councillor Turner also queried the payment to Hunter Training.

The RFO answered that 3 operatives went for working at heights training. This is required for installing the Christmas lights.

Councillor Raspin asked the RFO about the Market rent final payment of £775.00.

The RFO told Members that this is the last rental payment.

Councillor Turner **PROPOSED** that Members **APPROVE** the schedule of payments for November, 2020.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Walker.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the schedule of payments for November, 2020 totaling £150,224.93.

(b)      Monthly bank reconciliation & Bank statement – November, 2020.



Councillor Turner **PROPOSED** that Members **APPROVE** the bank reconciliation & bank statement for November, 2020.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Walker.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the bank reconciliation & bank statement for November, 2020.

(c) Monthly Income & Expenditure – November, 2020

Councillor Walker asked the RFO whether Members are being asked to propose a precept based on the information given, at this meeting or at Full Council in January.

The RFO informed members that last year a group meeting to discuss the budgets was held. This will not be possible this year. She said that the information in the report shows the projected outturn and estimates for next year with a precept of £994,500. The RFO told Members that it has been an exceptionally challenging year as there has been no trading therefore no figures to forecast from. She has used the figures to October and last year's figures. This is based on the assumption that Junction will reopen in February 2021. The RFO has met with all Officers to go through the figures.

Councillor Walker informed Members that as he had received the Agenda late, he didn't want to commit to anything without further investigation. He asked whether anything agreed would need ratifying at Full Council on the 7<sup>th</sup> January.

The RFO informed Members that the precept will need to be agreed at the meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> January. She asked Members to send any questions or comments to her before the 7<sup>th</sup> January allowing her time to recalculate figures prior to the meeting.

Councillor D Jeffreys expressed concern regarding the £83,000 shortfall in the advised amount to be held in Reserves as the Auditor has previously addressed this issue.

The RFO answered that some progress has been made as last year's shortfall was £128,000. She told Members that the prepaid money for the Pantomime now needs refunding and things are so difficult to predict with the ongoing changing situation.

The RFO said that the reason for the small surplus is that the whole of the East Riding's tax base has been reduced by 18% and with many people claiming Council tax benefit the East Riding is not getting the amount of Council tax it normally would. Without knowing how long lockdown could last, she has just predicted a small surplus.

A discussion took place about the amount of new houses being built in Goole within the next year or so.

The RFO informed Members that all new houses are calculated on Band D and they need to be built and inhabited before any Council Tax is paid.

Councillor Whitehead informed Members that in such uncertain times the Council needs to be realistic about its finances.

Councillor Turner **PROPOSED** that Members **NOTE** the report for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Moiser.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report for the period ending 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded for the following items under the public bodies (admission to meetings act) 1960 in that they contain commercial or personal information as defined under the local government act 1972 schedule act 12a the divulgence of which may be detrimental to the council.

**PR1994      MONTHLY DEBTORS – NOVEMBER, 2020**

Members were in receipt of the above report

The RFO informed Members that she has a face to face Court appearance with Debtor B on the 20<sup>th</sup> January at Doncaster Magistrates Court.

Councillor Bailey stated that it is good to see Debtor A doing well and the debt coming down.

Councillor D Jeffreys asked about Debtor C.

The RFO stated that this is the remaining balance for the Kent Road play area.

Members **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report.

**PR1995      TOWNS DEAL – PARKS UPDATE**

Members were in receipt of the above report

The RFO informed Members that she has been getting lots of quotes for the park works and since this report was printed the Planning Department has requested further information and for more work to be carried out. This means that new specifications have been sent out and we are awaiting the updated figures.

The RFO told members that planning permission is required for the car parks and multi-use games area but not for the changing rooms.

Since this report, one contractor has withdrawn and one quote has been received. Due to the issue being time critical with the consultation period being until the 8<sup>th</sup> January, the RFO is asking for Delegated Authority to make the decision along with the Buildings and Operations Managers. All work must be completed and paid for by the 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021.

Councillor Turner asked about the car park quotes saying that he believed the West Park to be just a small extension. He said that the quotes were an obscene amount of money and asked why national not local companies are being used.

The RFO explained that they are local companies. Groundworks is a local company which has carried out work for the Council previously. She explained that because the carparks are on East Riding land, full planning has had to be carried out.

Councillor Whitehead stated that she agrees with Councillor Turner that the quotes are too high even though they are of similar value. She asked whether we are in a position to obtain more quotes from local contractors.

The RFO informed Members that she has asked lots more contractors. These are the only ones who have replied and the timescale is short.

Councillor Bailey asked whether this went out to National tender. He said that it would be good to employ a local company.

The RFO informed Members that they weren't advertised in the National papers, but were sent out to Companies who have previously carried out work for the Council. She explained that we do not have access to ERYC's approved Contractors list. Local companies were asked but were not sending quotes in or could not complete in the timescale.

Councillor Whitehead asked for a list of local companies who were invited to tender.

The RFO said that the car parking is a more specialised job but the list of people for the changing rooms include Dave Pollard, Steve Batho, Craig Woodhouse and Helm & Ransome.

When asked why this is only just being sorted after being discussed some time ago, the Town Clerk answered

that this is the money from the Towns Deal Board and it was only formally agreed in September the amount of money allocated.

The RFO told Members that all 3 Contractors have inspected the sites and have come up with similar prices. The Towns Deal Board is providing £150,000 for this work. If the work is not completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 the Council loses the money.

The Town Clerk reiterated this stating that the Council needs to demonstrate that it can spend the money correctly. He told Members that the West Park car park originally cost £60,000 when it went out to National tender.

The RFO informed Members that she is asking permission for herself, the Town Clerk, OMA and Buildings Manager to make the decision as time is running out.

Councillors Turner and Whitehead informed Members that they can't agree to the quote as they feel it is too high. Councillor Turner stating that he knows of several contractors in Goole who could tender. He asked when the cut off is.

The RFO again stated that local contractors are not sending quotes in and the Council does not have access to East Ridings list. She reminded Members that all work needs completing by 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Councillor Whitehead asked whether she and Councillor Turner can source 3 or 4 Contractors before the end of the first week in January.

The RFO said that they would have to meet with Managers on site and follow protocol.

Councillor Turner asked whether it is possible to see the specification.

Councillor Whitehead said that they did not want to go against Standing Orders and will follow protocol but they would like the chance to sort this.

The RFO said that she would speak to the OMA about their getting the specification.

Councillor Walker **PROPOSED** that Delegated Powers be given to the four Officers, Councillor Whitehead and Councillor Turner to make the decision on the tenders.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Boatman.

The Town Clerk asked for a caveat, that this be done by the 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 in order to be endorsed at the P&R Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January.

It was **RESOLVED** that Delegated Powers be given to the four Officers, Councillor Whitehead and Councillor Turner to make the decision, with a caveat that this be done by the 8<sup>th</sup> January, 2021 in order to be endorsed at the P&R Meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2021.

## **PR1996      APPEALS AGAINST GRADING**

Members were in receipt of the above report

Councillor Whitehead informed Members that this is quite a contentious issue. She said that she has worked in People Management carrying out appraisals and reviews. She asked what evidence the Post Holders have provided for challenging their pay grade. She also asked Members for their thoughts on the issue.

The Town Clerk informed Members that there is a process to follow. A formal application is submitted stating how the job has changed over a period of years. This is reassessed against the National Single Status Job Evaluation Scheme. This involves many factors including different levels which are marked and checked against a Salary Scale. This is carried out by the Town Clerk and referred to the HR Sub-Committee to review and challenge.

Councillor Whitehead asked how the jobs have changed to warrant this regrade.

The Town Clerk gave Members an account of how both posts have changed significantly. He said that the jobs

were undervalued from the start. An evaluation has not been carried out for approximately twelve years.

Councillor Walker informed Members that there are three Members on the HR Sub-Committee, himself, Councillor Flynn and Councillor Head. He said that they had been unable to meet up due to covid restrictions. He explained that they have carried out three regradings, these two and the replacement ALM. He said that they are not trained in HR. They can question but are not totally sure what the job entails.

Councillor Walker informed Members that the intention is to have all Council posts regraded by an Independent Assessor. He said that if these regrades go through it is difficult to take back. A decision needs to be made and the Council needs to be careful as they could be taken to tribunal if they don't accept the Town Clerk's assessment.

The Town Clerk informed Members that Councillor Head and Councillor Flynn are happy with his recommendations.

After much discussion with Councillors saying that if pay reviews took place more regularly this would not have been such a large rise in salaries in one go, Councillor D Jeffreys informed Members that they should respect the recommendations and value the Officers. He said that they are very committed and do an excellent job.

Councillors stated that they agree with the increments but wanted a greater understanding of the process.

The Town Clerk informed Members that until an appeal is made nothing can be done. He suspected that there was underpayment however there is no mechanism to deal with it until the appeal is made.

A discussion took place regarding Independent Reviews and whether salaries could be audited more regularly.

The Town Clerk stated that we are stuck with the National Scheme which is very mechanistic. A review could Be carried out by the Council's new HR Company which would cost.

Moving forwards it was agreed to go with the recommendations in this case but no rash decisions should be made in the future.

Councillors discussed whether an Independent Review of all staff should take place. The HR Sub-Committee will look into this as it could cost more than it is worth.

Councillor Turner **PROPOSED** that Members **APPROVE** the recommendations of the HR Sub-Committee.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor D Jeffreys.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members **APPROVE** the recommendations of the HR Sub-Committee.

**Meeting concluded at 8:47pm**

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