

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Community Hall on Monday 17 January 2022 at 6.42 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs K Fellows- Chairman
Councillor DM Craigie
Councillor EJ Bowden
Councillor Mrs J Chaudry
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor A Humphries
Councillor WT Moy (Ex officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C Bowden, NR Griffiths, AH Laird, CM Murray & AM Sinton.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors, RG Beale, GR Brookes, G Duffy, J Grady & RJ Morris.

222. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

223. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2021.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held on 6 December 2021 at the Community Hall be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

224. BUDGET AND ESTIMATES 2022/2023 - (within the remit of the Community & Amenities Committee)

To consider any recommendations made by the Community & Amenities Committee at its meeting on 17 January 2022 (held immediately prior to the Resources Committee's meeting). *[Full report and supporting Income & Expenditure Sheets provided with Agendas for both Committees].*

Councillor A Humphries asked the Town Clerk how to justify the rationale for the suggested rise in precept for residents. The Town Clerk responded that the matter of precept was the next item on the agenda whereas this item related to the recommendations of the Community & Amenities Committee recommendations for that part of the Town Council draft estimates and budgets, including supplementary income streams, fees and commissions for the next Municipal period. There were no further questions arising.

Budget and Estimates 2022/2023. To consider any recommendations made by the Community & Amenities Committee at its meeting on 17 January 2022 (to be held immediately prior to the Resources Committee's meeting). See also Minute reference 220 of the Community & Amenities Committee meeting held earlier on 17 January to record that the Draft Estimates for the Municipal Year 2022/2023 including the presented Review of Charges and Fees within

the remit of the Community & Amenities Committee be recommended to Full Council for consideration on 24 January 2022.

RESOLVED There were no questions arising. That the information was noted. That the draft estimates for the Municipal Year 2022/2023 including the presented review of charges & fees (within the remit of the Community & Amenities Committee), including the proposed changes be recommended to Full Council for consideration on 24 January 2022.

225. COUNCIL ESTIMATES AND DRAFT PRECEPT FOR 2022/2023 -

Council's Estimates including the draft precept for 2022/2023 – to consider the report and income & expenditure details [*provided with agenda*] and the recommendations of the Community & Amenities Committee [*see minute reference 224 above*] and to make recommendations upon the Council's Budget, Estimates & Precept for 2022/2023 to Council at its meeting on 24 January 2022. The deadline for receipt of the 2022/2023 final precept confirmation by Wychavon District Council is 26 January 2022.

The Town Clerk went through and explained the draft budget, estimates and precept calculation as presented on the accompanying reports. The income, expenditure and review of fees & charges attributed to the Community & Amenities Committee was referenced as a component part (see minute reference 224 above).

The Town Clerk explained that the suggested increase in precept was 1.30% resultant from a precept request of £412,000.00 to Wychavon District Council. This would represent a Band D property increase from an annual Council tax of £47.06 to £47.67, an amount of £0.61 pence per annum. With the precept support grant element of £36,119.00 this gives a total of £448,119.00. Overall this provides an estimated addition to balances of £29,712.00 [*detailed on page 5 of Income & Expenditure summary*]. The Town Clerk cross referenced to the accompanying reports including the matrix of Council Tax Base calculations Bands A to H. It was confirmed that the draft estimates, budgets and precept calculations had been presented in detail to the Leader of the Town Council, the Chairman of the Community & Amenities Committee and the Chairman of the Resources Committee by Officers on 11 January 2022. The draft had also been verified with the Wychavon District Council – Chief Accountant on 7 January 2022.

The Town Clerk explained the reserves position in that with consideration for the restricted capital reserve elements (approximately £195,000.00) the remaining estimated total reserves of £424,207.00 has £229,207.00 as accessible. This conforms to the recommended level for at least 50% of the total precept value (half of £412,000.00) to be maintained in reserves.

Councillor A Humphries asked the Town Clerk how to justify the rationale for the suggested rise in precept for residents (see previous minute 224). The Town Clerk explained that his Officers role was to outline and explain the finance position and options for the Town Council to consider. Any explanations including public communications for the ensuing decisions would need to be considered and agreed by the Elected Members themselves. The Chairman asked Councillor Humphries whether he had any suggestions how he may wish to take a precept communication forward. In general discussion the option of a press communication statement was suggested. Councillor WT Moy commented that the agenda for the meetings including the draft precept and budget options was in the public domain and it was noted that there had been no questions arising or public attendance this evening. The Town Clerk reaffirmed that the agenda item was to consider the actual draft estimates, budget options and precept as presented.

Councillor RP Hopkins asked whether consideration for solar panel options could be paid for from capital reserves. The Town Clerk confirmed this would be in order. Councillor Hopkins commented that the suggested increase in utilities (£1,000.00) was too low due to emerging energy price increases. The Town Clerk made reference to the report including that the current utilities position was within budgets, anticipated savings on efficiencies from the central heating works carried out for both buildings in November 2021 and any further options arising from the Peep Surveys currently in course this year.

Councillor Hopkins referred to item 23 of the report for Strategic Priorities & Projects, part (j) for Neighbourhood Planning Options. He commented that the draft estimates, budgets and precept cannot be supported unless the item is removed from the report. Councillor A Humphries added that the item was not relevant and should not be included.

The Town Clerk explained that the list of strategic priorities and projects within the financial report covered many different subjects including Neighbourhood Planning options. Item 23 of the report is presented in no ranked order and was not an exhaustive list.

Provision for the Neighbourhood Planning Options was relevant in the context of the draft estimates, budgets and precept options for the reason that £2,000.00 funding provision had been included as put forward.

The information was noted and there were no further questions arising.

RESOLVED – 1. That the Resources Committee makes a recommendation to Council to request a requirement of £448,119 being £412,000 in precept and a precept support grant element of £36,119. This represents an increase of 1.30% for a precept of £412,000 with a Band D property increase from an annual council tax of £47.06 to £47.67, an increased amount of £0.61 pence per annum.

2. That the recommended changes be made to Fees & Charges for 2022/2023 (Community & Amenities Committee remit).

3. That the Grants Budget (S137 Grants and Sponsorship) be set at £5,000.00 as detailed in the estimates to enable financial assistance for Groups, Festivals and Events in the Town. To be referred to the Grants Appraisal Panel for scrutiny and consideration with onward recommendation to the Community & Amenities Committee. An additional consideration for a further £2,500.00 to be made available from the general contingency should the demand for C & A grants exceed the allocated £5000.00 (the same arrangement as prior year).

4. That there be no maximum threshold of grant allocation applicable to the Grants Appraisal Panel recommendations.

5. That £15,000.00 towards the planning and arrangements for the deferred Mayflower 400 Event (originally 4 July 2020) now to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Community Event to take place on 4th June 2022, be allocated from the Reserves/Events Budget (with a confirmed commitment of 50% match funded from Wychavon District Council).

6. That the attached estimates report for 2022/2023 be recommended to Full Council for final consideration on 24 January 2022.

Of the Members of the Resources Committee present 4 voted in favour and 2 abstained.

226. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.

Creditor accounts in the sum of £21,874.33 were considered for payment [*lists attached with Agenda*].

RESOLVED- There were no further questions arising. That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £21,874.33 be authorised and duly passed for payment.

The meeting closed at 7.12pm.

Chairman of Committee

7 February 2022

Chairman of Council

24 January 2022