

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, St Richards House on Monday 9 October at 6.15 pm

PRESENT: Councillor GR Brookes (Chairman)
Councillor SJ Brazier
Councillor GA Duffy
Councillor N Franks
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor AM Sinton
Councillor Mrs K Fellows (Ex- officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors P Clements, AL Key & RJ Morris.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Mrs C & EJ Bowden, M Brook, Mrs JM Chaudry, D Davidson & J Grady.

166. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

167. MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2023.

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 24th July 2023 in the Council Chamber, St Richards House [*circulated with Agenda*].

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Resources Committee held on 24th July 2023 at the Council Chamber , St Richards House, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

168. Special Grants - Special Resources Committee Grants – To receive and note the attached letter of appreciation for the South Worcestershire - Citizens Advice Grant which was paid in July 2023 [*letter with Agenda papers for information*].

RESOLVED The information be noted.

169. Graffiti & Vandalism to Bus Shelters- To update that options and scope are being investigated for coordinated cleaning, repair, renovation and target hardening of bus shelters in some specific and vulnerable locations of the Town which are subject to ongoing high levels of anti- social activity and damage. The Town Council owns and maintains approximately 30 bus shelters and 5 or 6 of these are in heavily affected locations, including parts of Ombersley Way, Worcester Road and Celvestune Way. A test refurbishment including the application of Anti – Graf protective coating of one shelter on Ombersley Way is proceeding within the provision of the existing maintenance budget. This will enable further informed consideration and updating for other locations in line with budget setting.

The Town Clerk added that a road traffic accident in the early hours of Saturday 7th October 2023 had affected one of the Ombersley Way bus shelters adjacent the junction of New Chawson Lane. The shelter had been demolished by the collision and the driver had initially failed to stop and fled the scene. The driver was later apprehended by the Police and arrested for dangerous driving and suspected driving under the influence. A request for Management

of Police Information (MOPI) will be taken forward in due course to ascertain options for recovery of costs and an insurance claim. The remnants of the shelter have been taken away by Town Council contractors over the weekend, pending recovery of costs and consideration for a replacement structure in the same location [*for information*].

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED The information was noted.

170. Interim Review of Income and Expenditure- To receive and review the report of all Town Council income and expenditure to budget plans and costs centres as at the 30th September 2023 [*Reports attached for consideration and review*].

The Town Clerk explained the report provided and made reference to the Cost Centre for Local Government Elections and the £23,304 expenditure which relates to the May 2023 Elections. It was updated that £6,000 is allocated within the annual estimates , budget setting and precept for these costs which are then paid out on the occasion of the Elections every fourth year.

Councillor AM Sinton commented on the shortfall position of the TIC income from sales year to date. The Town Clerk acknowledged that this was lower than anticipated although there is a seasonal up turn expected with sales for Christmas, from mid – November, including Charity Christmas Gift franchising. It was acknowledged that any shortfall in TIC revenue would most likely be offset from the expected higher than budgeted out turn position of the Community Hall revenue, forecast by the year end in late March. It was noted that the TIC income target should be reviewed at the next estimates budget setting and precept scheduled for December and January.

Councillor RP Hopkins asked whether the Municipal Planting expenditure was variable through the year according to the seasonal work. The Town Clerk explained that the Contract was paid on an equal monthly instalment basis through Standing Order with no seasonal variations.

Councillor Hopkins asked for a breakdown of the Community Hall Running Costs expenditure to be provided for him, and for consideration at the next estimates, budget setting & precept to include asset depreciation – specifically any requirements to renew or upgrade dated IT equipment. These two requests were noted.

The Town Clerk reminded that the expected Boiler replacement and the Server renewal from August were both costs to be paid through the Reserves and had not been part of the budgets set in January 2023, although a budgeted operational contingency of £12K was in place to absorb part of these costs. The general expectation is maintained that the budgeted position overall remains on track for the end of March 2024.

The Chairman commented that the interim position summarised was encouraging given that many Councils in the Sector faced financial challenges.

RESOLVED The information was noted.

171. To consider the exclusion of the Public and Press by passing the following motion:

That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.

Councillor N Franks questioned the necessity for the exclusion being considered. The Chairman and Councillor Duffy explained that this was normal procedure for all Councils when discussing commercially sensitive and some specific financial matters - in this case elements of Payroll arrangements, named Contractors and estimates.

RESOLVED That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.

172. Asset Signage Sponsorship Scheme - To update that continuing difficulties are being encountered with collecting the annual revenue share derived from the asset media sponsorship scheme. The Town Council currently maintains three signage sponsor options on an equal share annual supplementary income arrangement with the Service Provider, in place since 2015/2016. The attached confidential correspondence and copy email chain refers.

Officer's recommendation is now to consider approaches to contact the individual sponsors directly and/or instruct recovery options.

By consensus it was agreed that the endeavours taken by the Town council Officers to transact payment for the Asset Media signage revenue share were correct and reasonable. The continuing lack of cooperation from the Service Provider was noted as disappointing and the option agreed to proceed to instruct a Debt Recovery Agent should the position remain unresolved. Other options suggested to consider were contacting the three sponsorship Companies directly and formal proceedings against the Service Provider through the Small Claims Court. The Town Clerk suggested keeping the latter two approaches in reserve in the hope that the position can be retrieved by repayment of the revenue owed.

RESOLVED To approach the Service Provider again for settlement including engagement with a Debt Recovery Agent for support should the need arise. To consider contact with the three asset sponsorship Companies and/or an approach through the Small Claims Court for proceedings against the Service Provider if necessary.

173. Boiler Replacement – St Richards House – Pursuant to minute references 254/2022-2023 of the Resources Committee meeting held on 16 January 2023, 57/2023-2024 of the meeting on the 12 June 2023 and 112/2023-2024 of the meeting on 24th July 2023, to confirm that the delegated Working Group met on 8th September. Three written quotations were considered all of which fall within the procurement threshold. The recommendation is outlined on the confidential paper attached with the Agenda for final consideration for approval.

RESOLVED To endorse the recommendation of the Delegation and accept the Quotation provided by Bourne Site Services for £18,400.00 (subject to VAT at 20%) dated 8th August 2023. Job Number BSS.Q.3268

174. HMRC PAYE Anomaly- Pursuant to minute reference 111/2023-2024 of the Resources Committee Meeting held on 24 July 2023 to note further correspondence received on this matter. This follows a different notification for a reduced value received from a second Agent appointed by HMRC on 29 August 2023. The case has again been referred to the Payroll Agent (Wychavon District Council) following direct dialogue with the Agency. The reply to HMRC with evidential supporting papers prepared by WDC is provided – dated 11th

September 2023. A further letter from HMRC dated 25 September 2023 is attached with Agenda papers and has been forwarded to WDC for their urgent attention and response *[for information]*.

The Town Clerk updated that this matter was disappointing due to the protracted correspondence and time being taken to reach a satisfactory outcome. The appointed Payroll Agents – Wychavon District Council had responded again on 9th October 2023 that there were sending a further response to HMRC to reaffirm the position that there is no PAYE outstanding for payment in relation to the DSTC payroll arrangements in prior aor current year periods. It was also commented that WDC had acknowledged that they had encountered similar difficulties with their arrangements through HMRC as THE Payroll Agents for other Organisations recently.

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED To continue to monitor the situation working with WDC as the appointed Payroll Agent for the Town Council. To update on any further developments towards full resolution of the matter with HMRC accordingly.

175. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor accounts in the sum of £11,687.24 were considered for payment. Total expenditure presented £11,687.24 *[lists attached with Agenda]*.

There were no questions arising.

Total expenditure authorised = £11,687.24

RESOLVED-. That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £11,687.24 be authorised and duly passed for payment. Total expenditure authorised = £11,687.24.

The meeting closed at 6.42pm.

Chairman of Committee

4 December 2023

Chairman of Council

18 December 2023