

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, St Richards House on Monday 15th January 2024 at 7.03 pm

PRESENT: Councillor GR Brookes (Chairman)
Councillor SJ Brazier
Councillor M Brook
Councillor Mrs J Chaudry
Councillor GA Duffy
Councillor N Franks
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor Mrs K Fellows (Ex- officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C Bowden, EJ Bowden, DI Davidson, J Grady & RJ Morris.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors V Humphries & AM Sinton.

286. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

287. MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2023.

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 4th December 2023 in the Council Chamber, St Richards House [*circulated previously*].

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Resources Committee held on 4th December 2023 at the Council Chamber , St Richards House, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

288. Budget and Estimates 2024/2025. To consider any recommendations made by the Community & Amenities Committee at its meeting on 15 January 2024 (to be held immediately prior to the Resources Committee's meeting) [*full report attached with Agenda including draft estimates, budget and precept for 2024/2025*].

Draft Minute reference 274/2023-2024 from the Community & Amenities meeting on 15th January 2024 (preceded this Resources Committee meeting) recommends no changes to the presented information in the financial report and accompanying estimates within the remit of the Community & Amenities Committee. This includes a review and no changes for services, fees, commissions & charges and to maintain the same for the Community Grants Scheme. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED To recommend the Councils Estimates 2024/2025 for services, fees, commissions & charges within the remit of the Community & Amenities Committee, as well as the C & A Committee presented budgets and the arrangements for the Community Grants. To recommend the presented estimates as outlined in the 2024/2025 Financial Report pertinent to the Community & Amenities Committee without changes - for consideration for final approval by Full Council at its Meeting on 22nd January 2024.

- 1. That the Grants Budget (S137 Grants and Sponsorship) be set at £,5000.00 as detailed in the Estimates to enable reasonable financial assistance for Community Groups, Festivals and Events to be referred to the Grants Appraisal Panel for scrutiny and consideration, with onward recommendation to Community & Amenities Committee.**
- 2. That no change is made to Charges, Fees and Commissions for the period 2024/2025.**

289. Council's Estimates and Precept for 2024/2025. To consider the full report [*attached with Agenda*] and the recommendations of the Community & Amenities Committee [*to be reported verbally as preceding Agenda Item*] and to make recommendations upon the Council's Budget, Estimates & Precept for 2024/2025 to Council at its meeting on 22 January 2024. The deadline for receipt of the 2024/2025 final precept confirmation by Wychavon District Council is 26 January 2024.

The Town Clerk confirmed that questions had been received and responded to in advance of the meeting from Councillors G Duffy and RP Hopkins. It was also confirmed that the Drafted Estimates, Budget and Precept reports had been covered fully with the Leader of the Council, The Chairman of The Resources Committee and the Chairman of the Community & Amenities Committee as usual during preparation.

Councillor M Brook enquired whether the announced closure of the towns Lloyds Bank Branch would cause any difficulties for the Town Council operations. The Town Clerk confirmed that this aspect had been considered and was included with a section of background within the financial report and there were no over-riding concerns. The default position after closure of the branch will be to use the Post Office for any counter services or an alternative nearby branch of Lloyds. There is no essential requirement for daily Bank counter services and measures continue to embrace technology for card payment, digitalisation and minimising cash usage.

Councillor N Franks asked whether the Town Council financial position would be able to sustain the withdrawal of the Wychavon District Council precept support grant – currently £ 36,119.00 per annum. The question was raised in the context of wider economic austerity, Local Government sector financial pressures and the ongoing payment arrangements for future years of the WDC grant not being guaranteed. The Town Clerk confirmed that this had been considered within the overall position and financial forecasts presented in the Report. These considerations and options included the Town Council supplementary income streams, emerging strategic projects which will in turn create further income earning potential & revenue opportunities, savings to be made in areas of the business and the overall accumulated reserves position . For these reasons at this time there is sufficient capacity and foresight to enable the Council Tax Support Grant element to be alternatively provided for should this contribution cease from WDC in future years.

There were no further questions. The Town Clerk outlined and explained the 6 recommended principles as outlined below starting with the estimates & budget setting and including the Precept calculation.

RESOLVED To recommend the following in respect of the Town Council estimates, budgets and precept 2024/2025, for consideration for Final Approval at the meeting of the Full Council on 22nd January 2024.

1. That the attached estimates be recommended to Council for 2024/2025 subject to any amendments as now agreed.
2. That the Budget Requirement submission to Wychavon District Council includes the outlined precept and tax base calculation that is a Band D property level of £46.29 for 2024/25 representing a percentage decrease of - 0.58% (reduction of 0.27 p for the year)
3. That no changes be made to the Fees and Charges for 2024/2025.
4. That the Grants Budget (S137 Grants and Sponsorship) be set at £5,000 in line with prior year and as detailed in the Estimates to enable financial assistance for Festivals and Events to be referred to the Grants Appraisal Panel for scrutiny and consideration, with onward recommendation to Community & Amenities Committee.
5. That there be no maximum threshold of grant allocation applicable to the Grants Appraisal Panel recommendations. Guideline of recommendations from £500 to £1K is maintained.
6. That the Resources Committee makes a recommendation to Council to request a requirement of £436,259 comprising £400,140 in precept and a precept support grant element of £36,119.

290. Salwarpe Road VAS – To confirm that pursuant to minute draft reference number 215-2023/24 of the Committee meeting held on 4th December 2023 an approach has been made to the manufacturer for replacement parts and availability. The vandalised sign has been assessed and found significantly damaged beyond repair. Practical Insurance recourse options will be considered depending on the financial impact of sourcing a replacement sign unit as soon as possible. The quoted replacement value of the unit from the supplier is £2,399.99 net of VAT [*for information*].

RESOLVED The information was noted.

291. Graffiti & Vandalism to Bus Shelters and Street Infrastructure - To update that pursuant to 214-2023/24 of the Committee meeting held on 4th December 2023 that the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team have confirmed a financial contribution towards the purchase of some anti- graf paint. This funding has been sourced through the OPCC and will enable various vulnerable Highways signs to be better protected against anti -social behaviour and graffiti. A schedule of locations for cleaning and target hardening is being coordinated with WCC Highways over the next few weeks, using Town Council manpower resources. Consideration is to be made for cleaning and coating some bus shelters on Celvestune Way [*for information*].

RESOLVED The information was noted.

292. Safer Roads /OPCC Grants – Cross referencing to Agenda item 9 of the Planning Committee meeting scheduled for 15th January 2024 (WCC – Confirmation of additional Licenced suitable VAS location for Tagwell Road, Droitwich Spa). To consider a mandate to proceed for an OPCC – Edition 2 Funding application towards purchasing of solar VAS equipment for the location. WCC Highways provide and install the pole and base infrastructure and the funding would support purchase of the recommended specification solar sign equipment. The fund closes on 2nd February 2024 and a pre- requisite is confirmation of a licenced location by the Highways Authority as supporting evidence. Full details of the Scheme were provided to all DSTC Elected Members by email on 12th December 2023

RESOLVED The information was noted.

293. HMRC PAYE Anomaly- Pursuant to minute reference 221-2023/24 of the Committee Meeting held on 4th December 2023, Wychavon District Council (Acting in capacity as the nominated Payroll Agents for DSTC), has confirmed on 8th December 2023 that all submissions made to HMRC are up to date and correctly allocated . HMRC have also

confirmed the same and that there are no outstanding or overdue liabilities. This now concludes this matter satisfactorily *[for information]*.

RESOLVED The information was noted.

294. Office Tenancies- St Richards House. Pursuant to minute reference 223-2023/24 of the Committee Meeting held on 4th December 2023, to confirm that one of the rentable office rooms has now been exchanged by mutual agreement between the two established tenants. This is a satisfactory outcome for all and is effective from 1st January 2024. This changeover has minimal impact and enables consistency for the Town Council arrangements *[for information]*.

RESOLVED The information was noted.

295. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor accounts in the sum of £46,056.08 were considered for payment. Total expenditure presented £46,056.08 *[list attached with Agenda]*.

There were no questions arising.
Total expenditure authorised = £46,056.08

To note that
Bourne Decorators Limited £5,180.33
*Replacement cheque 012352 dated 12 June 2023 - cancelled
by Lloyds Bank - Out of Date*
Amount already approved on Remittance List 12 June 2023
therefore not included in total figure

RESOLVED-. That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £46,056.08 be authorised and duly passed for payment. Total expenditure authorised =£46,056.08

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.

Chairman of Committee

5 February 2024

Chairman of Council

22 January 2024