



Finance and Policy Committee
Thursday 14 December 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present: Cllrs: C Clark (Chairman), K McIntyre, R G Heseltine, E Jaquin, P Madeley and A Rankine.

Officers: Dave Parker (Chief Officer) and Les Chandler (Estate Manager).

1. To accept representations from the Public between 6.30 pm and 6.45 pm.

None

2. To accept apologies for absence.

Cllr P Whitaker – holiday.

Cllr C Harbron – absent.

3. To record declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in items on the agenda.

As a Managing Trustee of the charity Cllr Heseltine declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 13 on the Agenda – Tarn Moor Estate.

4. To consider the recommendations of the Chief Officer relating to requests for dispensations to Members on items requiring a declaration of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.

None

5. To note the minutes from the previous meeting held on 9 November 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the minutes from the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 9 November 2017 as a true and accurate record of what transpired at that meeting.

6. To report information arising from the minutes of items not on the agenda from Members and the Chief Officer.

None.

Chief Officer & Clerk to the Council: Dave Parker
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Chairman:

7. To consider the remit, membership and frequency of meetings of the revised Committee Structure.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that:

- The remit, number of members and frequency of the Finance and Policy Committee should remain unchanged given its role as the Council's key decision-making Committee.
- The number of members on the Audit and Scrutiny Committee should remain unchanged but it should meet quarterly and its remit should be enhanced to include evaluation of the decisions made by the Council's other committees, so as to ensure proper scrutiny of the Council's activities.
- The number of members on the Public Services Committee should remain unchanged but it should meet quarterly and its remit should be adjusted in response to the other changes to the Committee Structure ie: responsibility for Markets and for Events, Festivals and Town Centre Management functions should be passed to new Markets and Events and Tourism Committees respectively; and responsibility for the environment functions currently covered by the Environment & Planning Committee should be transferred to the Public Services Committee.
- The Environment and Planning Committee should be re-formed as a new Planning Committee with eight members – meeting as and when required at the discretion of the Committee Chairman and the Chief Officer – and with the remit to fulfil the Council's role as a statutory consultee for all planning applications within the Parish.
- The Markets Management Group should be replaced with a new eight-member Markets Committee - meeting quarterly - with responsibility for recommending and monitoring the Market budget and with the remit to oversee and approve: all operations surrounding the Market and associated activities, such as the monthly Farmers Market; and all other market-related activities, such as the regulation of car boot sales.
- A new Events and Tourism Committee should be created - comprising eight members and meeting quarterly – with the remit to: agree and approve the calendar of events each year; oversee all aspects of the Council's events, festivals and associated town centre functions; manage the Council's tourism brief; and take responsibility for the associated budget headings.
- Political proportionality should be maintained in determining the structure of membership of all Committees, apart from the Audit and Scrutiny Committee which must comprise those Members who are not elected to the Finance and Policy Committee.

Given the pressures on Councillors it was also **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council that Members should be allowed to appoint a substitute to represent them at any Committee meeting they are unable to attend, provided the identity of the substitute is advised to the Chief Officer when apologies are given.

8. To receive an update from the Chief Officer regarding the sale of land at North Parade, Skipton.

Members **NOTED** that the sale of land at North Parade is progressing.

9. To receive an update from the Chief Officer regarding the Council's accommodation at Skipton Town Hall and to consider the Council's approach to any claim for compensation.

Members **NOTED** that although the Council's main office, and therefore the meeting room, have been returned to use:

- both the Council Chamber and the Chief Officer's accommodation remain unusable;
- issues persist with the heating system; and
- several items of furniture and equipment have been damaged, for example by dust contamination and water ingress.

In the circumstances it was **RESOLVED** that the Council should:

- appoint a professional loss assessor to calculate the compensation due for loss of amenity, the impact on the Council's operations, and for physical damage to fixtures, fittings and equipment;
- seek to recover the compensation due from the Council's landlord, Craven District Council; and
- resume the payment of rent and service charges only when the agreed amount of compensation has been paid in full.

10. To consider an invitation from the Mayor of Simbach-am-Inn for an informal civic visit in January 2018.

In view of the need to discuss several issues, including the student exchange programme, it was **RESOLVED** that the Council should accept the invitation from the Mayor of Simbach-am-Inn to undertake a short civic visit to Skipton's twin town early in 2018.

In line with accepted protocols it was **RESOLVED** that the visit should comprise six representatives: the Mayor; the Mayor's Consort; the Leader of the Council; one other Councillor (if available); the Mayor's Secretary; and the Chief Officer.

It was also resolved that if the Leader is unable to attend, as seems likely, then Councillor Whitaker should attend in his place given his long association with Simbach and the twinning committee.

11. To consider matters relating to the Council's Budget and Precept for 2018-19.

Given the level of funding required to meet agreed service levels it was **RECOMMENDED** that the following proposed budgets should be put to Full Council for ratification in

determining the Council's Precept requirement for 2018-19:

	£		£
Rent and Rates	35,781	Bank Charges	1,335
Cleaning & Office Maintenance	2,800	Mayoral Allowance & Twinning	2,750
Communications	4,500	Allotments	9,955
Postage and Carriage	1,600	Recreation Grounds	25,540
Office Stationery & Consumables	1,300	Highways Verge Grass-Cutting	7,980
Office Equipment	2,350	Churchyards & Burial Grounds	13,540
IT	7,000	Street Furniture	2,855
Insurance	455	Street Lighting	9,161
Meeting Costs	200	Tree and Hedge Work	4,595
Training and Conferences	3,000	Statues and Memorials	455
Professional Charges	15,000	Public Conveniences	31,185

Given that the proposed Events and Tourism Committee will have financial responsibility for all associated expenditure it was **RECOMMENDED** that the budget for events, festivals and town centre functions in 2018-19 should mirror that for 2017-18, and that the new Committee should determine the extent of the Council's involvement in, and the budget for, each event.

To help in clearing the Council's maintenance backlog it was **RECOMMENDED** that the following budgets should be set for revenue projects in 2018-19:

	£
Replacement of another of the High Street trees.	1,610
Refurbishment of path edgings at Christ Church.	520

It was also **RECOMMENDED** that, if the sale of land at North Parade goes through:

- a budget of £50,000 should be set for capital projects in 2018-19; and that
- the Finance and Policy Committee should determine the final allocation of the budget to individual projects.

To maximise value for money in the delivery of highways verge grass-cutting services it was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council should:

- Place an order with Balmers GM Limited for a new SCAG SWZ48A hydro-drive walk-behind mower at a cost of £6,800 to improve workplace safety and service delivery, and minimise grass-cutting costs.

- Purchase a new Batesons SBN85 drive-on drive-off trailer to facilitate the deployment of grass-cutting equipment and to minimise costs.

In addition it was **RESOLVED** that the Council should:

- Acquire a suitable fuel card to minimise expenditure on fuel and oil.
- Seek to acquire a tipping licence if it will reduce the Council’s waste disposal costs.
- Replace its obsolete low pressure sodium street-lighting columns (SOX) on a phased basis over the next four years, funding the programme from the Council’s street-lighting revenue budget.
- Fit a shield to streetlight STC023 on Cawder Mews, off Cawder Lane, to prevent light pollution.
- Extend the contract with Bulloughs Cleaning Services Limited for the cleaning and securing of Coach Street Public Toilets until 31 March 2019 at an additional cost of just £250 a year.

To move the Council closer to achieving break-even in the provision of its allotment sites and grazing land it was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council should increase rents by 10% to:

- £88 a year for a full-size allotment and £44 a year for a half-size plot, both well within the affordability criteria set out in section 10 of the Allotments Act 1950;
- £220 a year for the grazing land at Greatwood; and
- £275 a year for the grazing land at Carleton Road.

Because of the financial implications involved it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee should hold an additional meeting in early January 2018, to assess the impact of its funding recommendations on the Council’s Precept requirement, before draft budget proposals are submitted to Full Council.

12. To consider excluding press and public for consideration of item 13 on the grounds that it relates to confidential matters.

It was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable and in the public interest that the press and public be asked to withdraw.

13. To deal with a matter relating to the Council’s role as Custodian Trustee to the Tarn Moor Estate.

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14. To receive notification of matters that members would like including on a future agenda.

None.

The meeting closed at 8.14 pm

Chairman:

Signature:

Date:

Chairman: