



## Northampton TOWN COUNCIL

### POLICY AND FINANCE MEETING

THE MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023 AT 6PM  
IN THE NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

**PRESENT:** Councillors Marriott (Chair), Birch, Connolly, Russell, Hibbert, Tarasiewicz, Purser and Hallam

**OTHER COUNCILLORS:** Councillor Soan

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr S Carter (Town Clerk), Mrs J Thorneycroft (Assistant Town Clerk), Mrs C Maclellan (Finance Officer) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

#### 36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Stevens, Purser, Alwahabi, G Eales and Holland-Delamere.

#### 37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

#### 38. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND ASK QUESTIONS AS TO THE PROGRESS OF ANY ITEM

In response to a question posed regarding the purchase of new civic robes, the Town Clerk explained that he understood an order had been placed with Michael's Civic Robes as agreed within the minutes and would request the Mayoral Officer to provide an update upon her return.

**RESOLVED:** The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 as a true and accurate records.

#### 39. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR INFORMATION

The minutes of the Accounts Sub-Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were tabled and queries were raised from members.

#### 40. TO RECEIVE FOR INFORMATION ONLY THE MINUTES OF THE STAFFING SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022

There was no discussion held under this agenda item, the minutes were received and reviewed.

#### 41. DRAFT 2023/24 BUDGET FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

The Chair explained the Committee Chairs met to discuss budget principles and then this was discussed in-depth in their individual committee meetings. The Chair reviewed the budget principles by each committee in order to gain the views of committee members.

Regarding Environmental Services budget, it was requested by Councillors a business plan be presented as a supplement to the Full Council agenda to provide more clarity on the projects that had been agreed. It was

raised by a Councillor that a business plan would enable the Council to benchmark over the next financial year (2023-24) and ensure its been spent accordingly. In response to a question posed by a Councillor, the Assistant Town Clerk explained the Event and Project Officer responsible for Northampton in Bloom had accounted for the increase in costs when developing the budget.

**NOTED**

Moving onto Community Services Committee budget, a Councillor raised whether £10,000 would be sufficient for Bands in the Park with the increase in supplier costs due to inflation. The Chair stated that if any increase in the Bands in the Park required then an amendment could be presented to Policy and Finance Committee and amended accordingly if agreed.

In relation to the Planning Committee budget, it was explained by a Councillor that despite no expenditure this financial year (2022-23) the Planning Committee intend to utilise funds to gain expert support with any complex planning applications, House of Multiple Occupants and start the process of developing an Area or Neighbourhood Plan. A Councillor posed that the 'Local Campaigns' budget code be renamed 'Planning Support' and a new budget code be created called 'Neighbourhood Plans', this would enable oversight of expenditure at the next budget setting in 2024. The Councillor continued, that the £20,000 originally held within the sole budget code Local Campaigns be reallocated with £10,000 held within the new 'Planning Support' budget code and the remainder held within the new 'Neighbourhood Plans' budget code.

It was agreed the Planning Committee's Local Campaigns budget code be renamed Planning Support and a new budget code created named Neighbourhood Plans that would host £10,000 in each.

**RECOMENDED:** That the Council approve a budget of £2,139,337.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Council set a precept of £1,807,837

#### **42. MODERN GOV – PAPERLESS AGENDA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The Town Clerk raised that the quotation outlined within the report were higher than expected however, he would source quotes from other suppliers and provide an analysis of current costs in issuing paper agendas. A Councillor raised that the costs associated with Modern Gov were similar to what a principal authority would pay, he also suggested contacting Civica and if any other local Parish Council would wish to partner to solicit a paperless service. A Councillor raised that he uses the Document Management System that was currently in use and found it very accessible. A Councillor raised that West Northamptonshire Council utilised a paperless system however some Councillors still request paper version.

The Town Clerk requested that both Councillor Hallam and Soan's assistance in reviewing the paperless options available.

**DEFERRED**

#### **43. VISIT TO DUNSTABLE AND WEYMOUTH TOWN COUNCILS**

A Councillor raised the services and assets held at Weymouth Town Council emulate what was raised in the Visioning Day held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and reiterated the importance of maintaining momentum.

A Councillor raised that Weymouth Town Council had many of their services, assets and accommodation were arranged prior to their vesting day whereas, Northampton Town Council was not provided much assistance in the lead-up to our vesting day.

**44. INTERNAL CONTROLS STATEMENT**

The Town Clerk explained further amendments needed to be made to the internal controls statement therefore, it would be presented at the next meeting.

**DEFERRED**

**45. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION ON THE NEXT AGENDA**

No discussion was held under this agenda item.

**MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7:26PM**