



## POLICY, FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

### Minutes of a Committee meeting held on Tuesday 9 January 2018 at 10.00am in Cullompton Town Hall

**Present:** Cllr James Buczkowski (in the chair) and Cllrs: Iain Emmett, Gordon Guest, Mike Thompson\* and Richard Thorne.

Judy Morris: Clerk

Also in attendance: Cllr Lloyd Knight

**NOTE:** It was noted that Cllr Mike Thompson was recording the meeting for his personal use.

\*in attendance for part only of the meeting.

81. **APOLOGIES:** Cllr Eileen Andrews (unwell).
82. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** None.
83. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME:** To receive questions from members of the public present at the meeting. None.
84. **FINANCE**
  - (i) **Internal Audit:** To receive confirmation that recommendations have been actioned.

**RESOLVED:** That this item is deferred until the next meeting.

- (ii) **External Auditor:** To receive notification that the auditor appointed to carry out the Council's external audit for 5 years commencing financial year 2017/18 is PKF Littlejohn LLP.

**RESOLVED:** That it is noted that PKF Littlejohn LLP has been appointed as the external auditor to the Town Council from 1 April 2018.

- (iii) **To receive financial reports for November 2017**

Cllr Mike Thompson stated his concerns with regard to the Council's accounts. He considered that there were inaccuracies and that the situation ought to be reported to the Police. He requested that the accounts be audited and offered to pay the first £500 of audit fees. He also stated his intention to go public with his concerns.

Cllr Mike Thompson was challenged to substantiate his accusation but did not.

*Cllr Mike Thompson left the meeting.*

The Chairman asked that it be noted in the Minutes that, due to the seriousness of the allegation, it should be referred to full council to consider if an auditor should be called in and not decided by this Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee issues the following statement: *“That based on previous audits the Committee sees no evidence to support malpractice”* Proposed Cllr Richard Thorne, seconded Cllr Iain Emmett.

**NOTE:** It was suggested that, in future, when staff purchase fuel using the fuel card they identify where the fuel is to be used e.g. for the van, digger, cemetery machinery, quad bike etc.

**(iv) 2018.19 budget and precept: To consider draft 2018.19 budget consider budget/financial report and approve recommendation to full council.**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That, as the Council does not have a project for the use of the Community Bus budget at present, the £10k in the Community Bus budget is transferred to a new “traffic management” budget line to be used to improve traffic management in the town centre. Proposed Cllr Iain Emmett, seconded Cllr James Buczkowski.
2. That the budget is approved as attached to these Minutes at Appendix A. Proposed Cllr Iain Emmett, seconded Cllr Richard Thorne.
3. That the Town Council precept for 2018/19 is £332,183.55 plus £1962.45 support grant making a total of £334,146.00 (details as attached at Appendix A). Proposed Cllr Iain Emmett, seconded Cllr Richard Thorne.

#### **NOTES:**

##### **Precept**

1. Due to an increase in the number of homes in the parish to share the precept cost between (Band D equivalent 3088.61 in 2017.18 and 3255.37 in 2018.19 the Council can increase its precept by approximately £15k without increasing the actual cost to the Council Tax payer.
2. 2017.18 Precept was £319,100 (£313757.28 plus support grant of £5342.72) – the percentage increase in 2018.19 precept is 0% due to the additional houses to share the cost between.

##### **Budget Income**

3. As MDDC has taken responsibility for street cleansing for the second half of 2017.18 the Council will not receive the income it had anticipated (about £13,500). However this can be offset as the Council will receive more income than it had anticipated in cemetery fees and by an underspend on payroll and other expenses.
4. **Service Agreements:** The 2018/19 budget assumes that MDDC will continue to carry out the street cleansing function and that DCC will not make a contribution towards the lengthsman work carried out by the Town Council.
5. **St Andrews car park:** From 1 April 2018 (provisional date) DCC will take on responsibility for management of St Andrews car park and a pay and display machine will be installed. It is anticipated that the Council will receive an income from this which, in future years will

offset the running costs. No allowance has been made for this in the 2018/19 budget as it is still very much an unknown.

### **Budget Expenditure**

- 6. Townscape Heritage project:** The Council agreed to contribute £26k to the project. £1k in the first financial year and then £12.5k per year in the second and third years. The Council currently has £13.5k in its ear marked reserves for the first and second year costs. As the project has now been delayed by a year the Council can spread the cost and put say £6.5k into its ear marked reserves in the 2018.19 budget and the final £6k in its 2019.20 budget.
- 7. CCTV:** An additional £1k included in the budget to allow for additional cameras to be installed in the town centre.
- 8. Payroll budget:** An allowance has been made in the 2018.19 budget to employ an additional member of the Administration Team. No funding has been included in the 2018.19 budget for a Neighbourhood Plan Administrator.
- 9. Grass verge cutting:** 2017/18 cost £2561, MDDC has stated that the 2018/19 cost for the same number of cuts will be £2521.74 (although they also state that this is an increase of 3% so unsure how they worked that out unless DCC are making a higher contribution).
- 10. Public Toilet contribution:** £5k in the budget as it could be sometime before we know what the long term future of the toilet will be.
- 11. Neighbourhood Plan:** £5k has been included in the budget as the Neighbourhood Plan process will now continue into 2018.19. MDDC has stated that it will contribute £5k to allow the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to progress the Plan further and a further £5k at a later stage dependent on progress and remaining tasks and checking what further funds are required.
- 12. Election contingency:** Due to having an election to pay for this year and, in hindsight, the Council ought to have a contingency for future years £5k has been included in the budget.
- 13. Data Protection services:** New budget line to allow for the introduction of the new data protection regulations from May 2018. Quote obtained
- 14. Traffic Management Policy:** New budget line to allow for consultation/development of Council traffic management policy

**85. Date and time of next meeting:** Tuesday 16 January at 10am.

The meeting closed at 12.10pm.

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_