

EARL SHILTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES of the FINANCE & POLICY WORKING PARTY MEETING

Held at 7.00 p.m. on

Monday 25 October 2021

At *The Independent Chapel, 89 High St.*, Earl Shilton, LE9 7LR.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors: Cllrs R Allen, I Faver and R Hills.

In attendance: Town Clerk Mr ME Jackson.
Members of public – nil.

1. *Election of a Working Party Chairman and possibly Deputy Chairman for the Civic Year.*

As only 3 Working Party members from 5 were present at this meeting it was decided that a Chairman would be elected for this meeting only.

Resolved: to elect Cllr R Allen as Chairman for this meeting only.

2. *Chairman's welcome and any opening remarks.*

Cllr Allen suggested Members proceed directly to the agenda.

Noted and received.

3. *To receive apologies for member absence.*

Cllr C Ladkin's apology was belatedly acknowledged and accepted by the Chairman and Town Clerk.

Noted and received.

4. *Declarations of interests. To receive disclosures of member's interests, i.e. the existence and the nature of those interests in respect of items on this agenda. **None.***

5. *To receive and approve as a true record, the minutes of the Finance & Policy Working Party meeting held on 11 January 2021.*

Resolved: to accept as a true record of the Working Party meeting of 11 January 2021; the minutes tabled for the Chairman's signature and already distributed in draft to members with their agenda packs.

6. *Annual Review of Council's (Working Party recommended amendments):*

- a. Standing Orders.

1. Correct minor typing inconsistencies e.g. upper case for lower case.

2. Suspend & reserve Section 3A *Virtual Meetings*.

- b. Financial Regulations.



1. Page 4, para 2.2 - amend to current practice, i.e. 'to monthly basis'.
2. Page 5, para 2.6 – amend to 'minimum of twice per financial year'.
3. Page 10, para 6.6 – amend to read 'review as necessary'.
4. Page 12, para 7.4 – add sub-para e) to 'allow GDPR redaction'.

c. Annual Risk Assessment.

The whole draft (pack item) document tabled to Full Council will clearly show the recommended amendments.

d. Policies & Procedures (HR) Handbook.

This 67 page handbook produced by LRALC's and ESTC's retained professional HR Consultant is recommended to remain extant until ESTC's external (LRALC) *Governance Review* to take place in 2022.

Resolved: detailed major amendments will be tabled to Full Council for ratification.

7. *Half Year spend against budget review by cost centre and account code.*

Actual spends by cost centre and code were generally reviewed by Members and the Town Clerk as RFO. Some codes are overspent, e.g. groundcare contractor works to make up for staff shortages and lack of expertise which is compensated for by the staffing cost code being underspent. Likewise investment income is significantly reduced because of the effect of the Pandemic on worldwide stock Markets. Overall the actual spend against budget for the financial year is on track and where necessary *Earmarked Reserves* have been used sparingly to the required effect.

Noted and received.

8. *To consider financial implications of the impending Library Office move.*

The Town Clerk briefed members on the costing exercise he'd undertaken with HBBC expert officers during the afternoon of this days meeting for the new Office furniture. The more detailed costings will be presented to Full Council as they have been to the Working Party but are grouped as follows:

- Apportioned County Council 'sunk' costs to prepare the new office already outlined to Full Council on 13 Oct 21 – **£9.3k.**
- New office and meeting room furniture & fittings - **£21k.**
- New computer and telephone systems - **£4k.**

Noting that:

- a. These costs do not include any professional physical removal costs of retained office furniture and equipment, e.g. fire proof safe and copier printer.
- b. Requisite new signage.
- c. The life cycle of all new bespoke new office equipment is based on a 10 year period, (i.e. the lease period), and that almost everything is portable, i.e. can be set up in a new location of similar sizes.
- d. The Earmarked Reserves dedicated to '*New Premises Projects*' will only be reduced from £458k to £423k.

Resolved: to recommend to Full Council:

a. **To, through the expertise of HBBC specialist Officers, order the bespoke new Office furniture and fittings as detailed and costed.**

b. **Pursue the 3 tender long term procurement of computer and telecoms hardware and software in order to make costed but qualitative decision.**

9. *Earl Shilton Sustainable Urban Extension (ES-SUE) – Consideration of access road Sept 2021 draft 'Option Agreement' received from the Barwood Land developer consortium.*

Members welcomed the Developer's indexed up valuation offer received letter which meets the basic expectations of the Town Council however: Members requested the Clerk to investigate the cost of a commercial provider currently undertaking an independent valuation and also a principal local council possibly valuing the current sale price rather than relying on indexation.

Resolved: to table all the latest information gathered on the Options Agreement to Full Council on Mon 08 Nov 21.

Last item.

The meeting closed at 8.27 p.m. with the Chairman thanking members for their attendance and contributions.

B m m

