

MAGHULL TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD 26th FEBRUARY 2020

PRESENT - Councillor Carr (In the Chair) and Councillors (Cllrs): K & T Hughes, P McKinley, D Mullen and J Sayers.

ALSO PRESENT –D. Healey (Finance Officer) and S. Lawrence (Minutes).

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Cllr C Carlsen.
2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** – None notified.
3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** – Member of Maghull in Bloom.

Cllr Carr suggested agenda item 10 – Maghull in Bloom be moved to first item due to public participation. All Cllrs agreed.

10. MAGHULL IN BLOOM

Members discussed the grant application for Maghull in Bloom. The application was contrary to the grant awarding policy of the Council in that it was for an amount larger than that specified in the policy and that the group had received a grant the previous year for the same amount. Members discussed the rationale in moving outside the policy guidelines for this particular application.

RESOLVED that:-

1. **Maghull in Bloom be awarded a grant of £2,000, in excess of the agreed policy of £500, due to the level of work the group does within the town;**
2. **The report be noted.**

Member of Public left the Council Chamber.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2019 for Finance & General Purposes Committee were approved as a correct record.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS AT 31st JANUARY 2020

The Finance Officer reported that finance reports had now been split into departments, giving a clear view of the current situation for the Council. The Finance Officer explained all budgets are on target, with the exception of Facilities budget having an under spend due to two vacancies not being filled. There were no issues to report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. **Any under spends at year end to be transfer to unallocated reserves;**
2. **The Financial Statements as of 31st January 2020 be noted.**



6. BUDGET 20/21

The Finance Officer reported the precept increase to £701,280. Majority of budgets remain the same from last financial year. However increased budget for Asset Maintenance to include Town Hall re-wire.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The proposed budgets for each department for the forthcoming financial year be agreed;**
- 2. The report be noted.**

7. NEW FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members were informed that the Financial Regulations had been reviewed by officers and updated. The regulations were then put to the Committee for scrutiny before being presented to the Council for their approval.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The amended Financial Regulations be recommended for approval to Full Council;**
- 2. The report be noted.**

8. RISK REGISTER 2020

Members were informed that the Risk Register must be reviewed annually. As part of that review the Neighbourhood Plan has been included following its successful adoption in 2019. The RFO has increased the risk to the Council to high, due to proposals to build 1700 homes on land East of Maghull. This change was due to the issues identified within the development and the need for further scrutiny by the Council.

Members were also informed that, in order to safeguard the level of reserves already accumulated by the Council, it was recommended that a limit be set as to the level of drawdown to be taken from the reserves regarding any actions to be taken by Council.

Members considered the items detailed in the Risk Register, including whether the loss of the Town Clerk was appropriate for the list. Members also stated that they were uncomfortable setting limits which may not always be appropriate and that each case should be judged on its merits.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The loss of the Town Clerk be removed from Risk Register;**
- 2. No limit would be set for drawdown of reserves;**
- 3. The report be noted.**



9. AGREEMENT WITH KNOWSLEY COUNCIL TO PROVIDE PROCUREMENT SUPPORT

Members were informed of the importance of procurement within the Council. The Council had a lack of expertise within certain sections of the procurement system and several large projects needed to be completed. Numerous contracts had also come to an end and the Council needed to revisit the marketplace to ensure Value for Money. However, this was a considerable body of work and assistance was required. Knowsley Council Procurement Service had been contacted and had stated that they were willing to enter into a Service Level agreement with the Council.

Key discussion points:

- Contact Sefton Council giving them an opportunity to put forward a service level agreement.
- Contact Liverpool City Region giving them an opportunity to put forward a service level agreement.
- Defer to next F & GP meeting.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. MTC to contact Sefton Council and Liverpool City Region Procurement Services to ascertain whether they would be willing to provide assistance;**
- 2. This item be deferred until the next appropriate Committee meeting;**
- 3. The report be noted.**

11. AUDIT REPORT

Members were informed that the Council had received the annual audit report from the Internal Auditor. The report contained 23 recommendations. Of these recommendations 15 had been implemented, leaving 8 outstanding. Of these remaining 8 recommendations 5 were given a high priority and 3 a medium priority.

High Priority Recommendations:

1. Facilities team, Stock checks to be implemented by May 2020.
2. Facilities team, hire of equipment spreadsheets to be implemented by May 2020.
3. Facilities team, Fuel card statements and invoices to be input on a spreadsheet, implemented by May 2020.
4. Town Clerk, complete our MTC policies.
5. MTC, Asset Maintenance inventory list to be collated and complete, target of completion July 2020.

Given the complexity of the recommendations within the report considerable progress had been made. The Council was working to a more robust standard of accounting procedure and accountability and this was being felt across the service.

Practices had been tightened up and firm assurances were given that the systems were working in a more efficient and accountable manner.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The progress made with the implementation of the internal auditor recommendations be noted;**
- 2. The timescales given for the implementation of the remaining recommendations be noted;**
- 3. The report be noted.**

12. PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE

Members were informed the Personnel Sub Committee is a sub-committee of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. This Committee now needed to meet and as such its membership needed to be agreed. Political balance rules required the following to sit on the sub-committee; four Labour members and one Conservative member.

Cllr McKinley informed this political balance has changed now as MTC have two independent Cllrs.

Cllrs suggested following:

- Cllr Thomas Hughes - Conservative party.
- Cllr Yvonne Sayers - Labour Party
- Cllr Denise Mullen - Labour Party
- Cllr Jonathan Desmond - Labour Party
- Nominated Cllr Frank Sharp - Independent Party

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The members of the Personnel Sub Committee be agreed as detailed above for the forthcoming municipal year;**
- 2. The report be noted.**

13. CHAIRS REPORT – None Given.

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded due to confidential nature of the item under discussion.

15. DEBTORS TO THE COUNCIL

Members were provided with a brief update of the debtors report. As MTC are coming to year end it would be poor financial management to continue to hold debts

which have no reasonable chance of being paid. Therefore, writing off the bad debts should be considered.

- Anchor Housing Group - £448.08
- Homestead - £1380.00
- St Thomas CE Primary school £477.00

Cllr McKinley provided update on the status of the Tennis Club as they are currently in arrears. Cllr McKinley was encouraged by the dedication from the Tennis Club to produce an action plan to raise money. A request was made to the Amenities Manager to clean the courts so they are fit for purpose.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The bad debts detailed above be written off;**
- 2. The report be noted.**

J.A. Sugg

CHAIRMAN

