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Minutes of a meeting of
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 21st June 2023
At School Green Centre commencing at 19.30

Present: A Grimes, L James (Chair), I Montgomery, D Peer, R Tatla

Attending: B Winton (Clerk), J Mason (Finance Manager)

23/FGP/26 **Chairman and Vice-Chair**

26.1 Cllr James was confirmed as chair of the committee by virtue of his position as Vice-Chair of the Council. Cllr James signed an acceptance of office form.

26.2 Cllr Grimes will chair the committee should Cllr James be absent. Cllr Grimes signed an acceptance of office form.

23/FGP/27 **Public Questions**

27.1 There were no public questions.

23/FGP/28 **Apologies and declarations of Members' Interest**

28.1 There were apologies From Cllr Clarke.

28.2 There were no declarations of members' interests.

23/FGP/29 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

29.1 The minutes of the committee meeting of 3rd May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by Cllr. James.

Proposed: Cllr Montgomery
Seconded: Cllr Peer
Approved: Unanimously

23/FGP/30 **Actions and Matters Arising**

23/FGP/8.2 Clerk to check position on Parish Hall Lease

The Clerk advised that he had not followed up on this item yet.

ACTION - Clerk to check position on Parish Hall Lease

23/FGP/18.4 Clerk and Facilities Manager to develop a long-term maintenance plan

The Clerk advised that this was at the early stages of development and would also be used to feed in to a detailed 5-year plan for the council.

ACTION - Clerk and Facilities Manager to develop a long-term maintenance plan

23/FGP/19.2 WBC requests for co-funding from CIL for bus routes (£118, 933.87) and Hyde End Lane footpath (£15-20,000)

The Clerk had added these to the agenda for the Full Council meeting on 17th May. Members had declined to fund the footpath request and had asked for more information from Wokingham Borough Council regarding the request for bus funding which had not yet been received.

23/FGP/20.2 Land Swaps

This was on the agenda at Item 10.2

23/FGP/23.1 New electricity supply contracts

This had been approved at the last meeting and the contract for two years was now in place.

23/FGP/31 **Annual Accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return for Year Ending 31st March 2023**

31.1 Report from Internal Auditor

The report from the Internal Auditor was discussed. Members **NOTED** the report

31.2 Notes to the Financial Statements

The notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 were discussed. Members **NOTED** the content of the notes

31.3 Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

It was agreed that Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 be recommended to Full Council on 28th June.

Proposed: Cllr Peer
Seconded: Cllr Montgomery
Approved: Unanimously

31.4 Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23

It was agreed that Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 be recommended to Full Council on 28th June.

Proposed: Cllr Tatla
Seconded: Cllr Peer
Approved: Unanimously

31.5 Notice of Public Rights

The contents and format of the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Governance & Accountability Return was discussed. Members **NOTED** the required content.

31.6 Reappointment of Internal Auditor

Members approved the reappointment of Claire Connell as Internal Auditor for the Council

Proposed: Cllr Peer
Seconded: Cllr Tatla
Approved: Unanimously

23/FGP/32 Risk Register

32.1 Risk Register

The Clerk provided a brief update on the Risk Register. There were no recommended changes to any of the risk items. The Clerk advised that he had issued a new procedure to staff setting out how to ensure that Freedom of Information requests were correctly handled. He would also share that document with councillors.

23/FGP/33 **Financial Reports**

33.1 Bank Reconciliations

Cllr. James confirmed that he had reviewed the bank reconciliations to the end of May 2023 on 21st June and that all was in order. A copy of the reconciliation was shown to members. Members **NOTED** the report.

33.2 Update of current financial position

The Clerk advised that income and expenditure were proceeding in line with set budgets for the year.

Members **NOTED** the report.

33.3 Update on Bookings

The Clerk advised that he had not formally tabled a Bookings Report for this meeting as it was still very early in the financial year. Performance for the first two months of the year at School Green Centre and Spencers Wood Pavilion would suggest achieving or slightly exceeding the target for the full year.

23/FGP/34 **Financial Reserves & CIL**

34.1 Members **NOTED** that the balance of unexpended CIL was currently unchanged at £1,467,876.

23/FGP/35 **Land Issues**

35.1 Land Registrations

There were no updates on land registrations.

35.2 Current Position regarding Land Swaps

It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr James would meet with Craig Hoggeth and Cllr Grimes with a view to taking each parcel of land separately rather than strive for a balanced package.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange the meeting

35.3 Whiteknights proposal

The Clerk updated members on discussions with Bellevue Place Education Trust (BPET) who run Whiteknights Primary school. The Trust had produced plans for a new building which would also suit community use outside of school time and discussions had been held regarding SPC managing this element with a share of costs/proceeds to be agreed.

At this stage BPET were asking for an indication of the potential level of support SPC would be prepared to offer.

Members favoured an approach which identified specific items/enhancements to the new build which could readily be associated with SPC's involvement. They were therefore supportive of making a contribution to the project subject to resolving the specific details of the arrangement.

It was agreed that a working party of Cllrs Grimes, James and Peer along with the Clerk and Facilities Manager would meet BPET to discuss further.

ACTION – Clerk to advise BPET accordingly

23/FGP/36 Investment Policy

36.1 The Clerk advised that he and the Finance manager would be meeting with Cllr James next week to discuss questions from CCLA regarding attitude to risk and the duration of investment ahead of formally moving funds.

ACTION – Clerk to arrange meeting

23/FGP/37 Proposal from Shinfield Studios

37.1 Cllr Grimes introduced the proposal from Shinfield Studios for the establishment of a screening facility at the School Green Centre. This would provide a use of the building on Friday evenings which tends to be a quieter evening for room bookings.

Members discussed the details and how this may look in practical terms at the School Green Centre. The Clerk set out one possible scenario for achieving this and consideration of the potential financial impacts.

Members agreed to recommend the proposal to Full Council.

Proposed: Cllr Tatla
Seconded: Cllr Montgomery
Approved: Unanimously

23/FGP/38 School Green Centre Final Payments

38.1 Members **NOTED** the final payment to Lifebuild which would go forward to Full Council for approval.

23/FGP/39 Financial Regulations

39.1 The Clerk advised that he had begun a full review of Financial Regulations and would report as soon as this had been completed.

23/FGP/40 Date of Next Meeting

40.1 Next meeting was scheduled for 16th August. The Clerk gave his apologies as he would be on holiday and the Deputy Clerk would attend in his place.

The meeting ended at 21.00