FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the BEST VALUE, SCRUTINY AND BRIDPORT AND WEST BAY TOWN PLAN SUB COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 11.00 a.m (reconvened on Monday 13 January 2014 at 11.00am)

PRESENT Cllr Miss S.A. Brown (from 11.15 am on 10 December)

Clirs: G.J. Ackerman Mrs M.J. Ray E.T. Colfox* D.G. Rickard

C.M. Ray Ms S.J. Williams (in the Chair until

11.15am on 10 December)

Also in attendance: Cllr Mrs E.A. Rickard.

*Not present when the Committee reconvened on 13 January 2014.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

22. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

23. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Best Value, Scrutiny and Bridport and West Bay Town Plan Sub Committee held on 3 September 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

25. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID

The Town Clerk reported on the recent Space Needs Review undertaken by BLAP. The findings of that review needed to be considered, alongside the proposed review of public buildings that potentially could be listed as community assets. It was hoped to report back to members in February/March 2014, with proposals on potential listings.

RESOLVED: that the latest position be noted.

26. <u>INTERNAL AUDIT – CURRENT POSITION AND FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS</u>

The Town Clerk reported that it was proposed to interview for a new Auditor in the New Year, with a view to the Council being asked to make an appointment in good time before Henry Lovegrove, the current auditor, retires in June 2014.

Other local councils, who also used Henry, were in the same position. Dorchester Town Council had advertised for a new auditor and asked candidates to agree that other councils, including Bridport, could meet the candidates and then decide on whether to interview any separately.

It was also reported that Henry Lovegrove had undertaken the first of his three visits for the 2013/14 audit on 21 October 2013. Having checked the systems for payments and salaries, no matters arose for comment.

RESOLVED: that the latest position on the 2013/14 audit be noted and the Town Clerk report back on proposals to appoint a new Internal Auditor for 2014/15 onwards.

27. HEALTH AND SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENT

The Town Clerk reported on the Risk Assessment report produced by Ellis Whittam and said that this was being looked at, with a view to producing an action plan.

In discussion of this issue, members mentioned the potential health and safety issues on market days from 'A' boards, reducing the space between the stalls and the shop fronts. It was asked if this could be looked at, especially bearing in mind the County Council's new policy on 'A' boards.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

28. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

29. FUTURE PROJECTS / DRAFT ESTIMATES 2014/2015

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2764.

Members received copies of the list of Town Plan projects, with proposed expenditure in 2014/15 and copies of the draft estimates for 2014/15.

The Sub Committee discussed the issues likely to affect the new budget. It was agreed that it was difficult to make any definite proposals, until the level of the Localisation of Council Tax grant and the tax base were known. The District Council had stated that this information might not be available until the New Year, as it was dependent on when they received confirmation from the Government on their grant settlement.

Members were reminded that no decisions were being taken at this time and the budget and the level of precept for next year would be considered at the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 15 January 2014 and approved at the full Town Council on 28 January 2014. However, this timing would depend on receiving information from the District Council on the level of the Localisation of Council Tax grant and the tax base.

To allow time for this information to be received, it was agreed that this Sub Committee meeting should reconvene in January. However, if the information was not available, it might be necessary to change this date and also possibly the dates of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Council.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05p.m on December 2013, and reconvened on 13 January 2014 at 11.00a.m, when it was reported that the information required to complete the budget - the tax base and the level of the Localisation of Council Tax grant - had been received.

Members considered the draft budget and agreed that this should go forward for consideration to the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Council.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm on 13 January 2014.

The next meeting of this Sub Committee will be held on 4 March 2014