

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE held at Mountfield on Tuesday 7 December 2021 at 11.00a.m.

PRESENT Cllr Sarah Carney

Cllrs: Geoffrey Ackerman	Maggie Ray
Sandra Brown	Anne Rickard
Barry Irvine	Steve Williams

Also in attendance: Paul Fuszard (Finance & Office Manager) and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the Public Forum.

22. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Martin Ray and Dave Rickard.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

24. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Best Value and Scrutiny Sub Committee held on 7 September 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Consideration was given to a report of the Dorset Parish Independent Remuneration Panel, ENCL: 3675, setting out options for payment of members' allowances, linked to the Dorset Council scheme. The Chairman introduced this item and summarised the available options should the Council agree to adopt the scheme proposed by the Panel.

Members discussed:

- The significant responsibilities of town councillors, with a large number of meetings and responsibilities;
- The significant costs to councillors elected to town and larger parish councils;
- The disincentive to low-income and younger people of not providing some compensation for the costs associated with councillor work;
- The reputational aspects of members' allowances;
- The Council's financial position and the implications of allowance payments; and

- Concern that the proposed scheme is based on population size and provides little flexibility for councils such as Bridport, whose scope is wider than other councils in towns with similar populations.

RECOMMENDED: that the Scheme of Allowances be adopted at Level 4, and that this decision be reviewed following the Community Governance Review.

26. INTERNAL AUDIT

Consideration was given to a report of the Internal Auditor, ENCL: 3676.

RESOLVED: that the audit report and recommendations be approved.

RESOLVED: that the Finance & Office Manager be thanked for his work in support of the audit process.

27. WEST BAY CAR BOOT SALE GRANTS SCHEME

The Town Clerk reported that five town councillors and one Dorset councillor were to be appointed to the panel, which would make recommendations to the Finance and General Purposes Committee in March 2021.

RESOLVED: that the West Bay Car Boot Sale Grants Scheme Panel comprise Cllrs Steve Williams, Sarah Carney, Maggie Ray, Martin Ray, Anne Rickard, Sandra Brown and Dave Rickard, and two Dorset Council members, one of whom should be Cllr Sarah Williams.

28. COMMUNICATIONS

The Town Clerk reported that Dorset Council had announced a draft budget that would result in a 3% increase in its element of Council Tax.

29. 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.

30. DRAFT ESTIMATES 2021/22

The Town Clerk reported the latest position on the draft budget, ENCL: 3677. Members considered the Clerk's report and made a number of suggested amendments to guide the draft and noted that confirmation of receipt of the tax base for 2022/23 would be welcomed, to help inform that process.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted, and recommendations go forward to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 17 January 2022 and the full Council on 25 January 2022, incorporating tax base and any further known changes.

The meeting closed at 12.19pm.

The next meeting of this Sub Committee will be held on 1 March 2022