

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE BAY OF COLWYN TOWN COUNCIL, HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, TOWN HALL, RHIW ROAD, COLWYN BAY AT 6.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 18TH NOVEMBER 2015

PRESENT: The Mayor, Cllr Dr Sibani Roy
Cllr D Griffiths, Chairman
Cllrs C Hughes, A Khan, A Mason, Mrs H Meredith, Mrs V Perry

OFFICER: Mrs T Earley, Town Clerk
Mr H Barlow-Edwards, Student Advisor

218/15 Welcome & Apologies for Absence:

The Chairman congratulated Cllr Adrian Mason on his recent by-election victory and welcomed Cllr Mason and Harry Barlow-Edwards to their first Committee meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs: A Pearson; P Richards; G Ward.

219/15 Declarations of Interest:

Members were reminded that they must declare the existence and nature of any personal and/or prejudicial interests. The following interests were declared:
- Cllr S Roy – agenda item 15: Local Members Ward Allowance project proposal
- Cllr D Griffiths – agenda item 16(a) – Rhos on Sea Promenade: request for support

220/15 Minutes:

Resolved to approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the last meeting, held on 30th September 2015.

221/15 Matters Arising from Previous Meetings:

a. Min. 121/15(e) – Locality / Place Plan:

The Clerk gave a brief verbal update following a meeting with James Harland, CCBC. An outline was given of the three stage process being used in Abergele to create a 'Place Plan', using a community hub website, social media and a variety of engagement events to gauge the views of local people. It was noted that a presentation on this process will be given at a future meeting of the CCBC/Town and Community Council forum, when it has been established how the software and processes could be replicated elsewhere.

Concern was expressed that there can be too much engagement and unless there is funding available to deliver some of the project/ideas, then people may lose interest and stop participating. It was noted that, due to recent legislative changes, 20% of future community infrastructure levies (from new building schemes – replacing S.106 agreements) will be available for Town and Community councils to allocate in their areas, but community engagement will be

necessary to determine the priorities for spending.

b. Min. 179/15 – Wellbeing of Future Generations (WBFG) Act -Consultation on Guidance:

- i. The Clerk advised the Committee that the WBFG Act is expected to be an important piece of legislation for the whole of the public sector in Wales and there will be a legal duty on the Town Council to take reasonable steps to help meet the objectives agreed in the local area well-being plan (by the new Public Service Boards). It is ground-breaking legislation and other countries are watching with interest. The current consultation is around the guidance which will be issued to the bodies which are subject to the Act. A separate document (SPSF4) has been produced to assist Town/Community Councils to understand their role. The Clerk attended a workshop on 4/11/15 with representatives from other local town councils (which fall into the over £200,000 bracket) and feedback was given directly to Welsh Government officials on where the guidance needs strengthening.

It was further noted that there is action the Council can begin taking now to start aligning its activities with the national Well Being Goals.

Resolved to recommend that all Grant application forms are amended to include a section on the national wellbeing goals, requesting applicants to highlight which of the goals its project/activity will contribute towards and any for which there may be a negative impact.

Further resolved to recommend to CCBC that Sophie Howe, the newly appointed Future Generations Commissioner, be invited to attend a future meeting of the CCBC / Town and Community Council Forum.

- ii. The Clerk tabled notes from a meeting of the OVW Larger Councils Committee, held on 14 October, at which the guidance was WBFG Act discussed at some length and a number of key points were made. It was resolved that the Chief Executive prepared the OVW response accounting for these comments and that this be circulated to larger councils prior to submission to the Welsh Government. However, the OVW response to the consultation had now been submitted (without prior circulation) and did not appear to cover the points raised.

Resolved to request the Clerk writes to OVW to query why the submitted response did not cover the points raised by the Larger Councils Committee.

c. Min 146/15 – Events Grant – Twilight Festival:

It was noted that the Twilight festival activities will now be taking place on Wednesday 2nd December from 4pm to 8pm, linked to the larger Coca Cola event.

d. Min 174/15 – Chamber of Trade Christmas activities:

The Clerk submitted copies of the event posters confirming the revised date and venue(s) for the two Concerts.

Resolved to receive and note the information and welcome the change of date/venue for the young people's concert.

222/15 Finance / Audit:

- a. ***Resolved to authorise payments made on behalf of the Council for the period 19/9/15 to 31/10/2015.***
- b. ***Resolved to receive and sign a copy of the latest bank reconciliations.***
- c. The Clerk submitted, for information, a report on the CCLA Local Authorities' Property Fund.

Resolved to receive and note the fund update.

- d. The Clerk submitted, for consideration, information and quotations for 'Facilities Booking' software packages available from RBS (current Finance software provider) and Edge Systems (an alternative local council software provider). It was noted that the use of specialist software to manage the room bookings would not only provide a reliable backed-up database of bookings, but would help to deliver a more efficient service and save time on preparing invoices and reports on usage etc. It would also have the capacity to grow should more rooms become available for hiring (e.g. in rear annexe). Although the RBS quote was dearer for initial purchasing and set up costs, Members agreed this may be preferable in the long term, as it would have the advantage of linking in to the Council's existing finance software and would therefore save staff time in recording payment of invoices and chasing outstanding invoices.

Resolved to recommend that the Clerk arranges for a demonstration of the RBS software, to compare this to the demonstration already received for Edge Systems, and that a recommendation is then brought back to this Committee for possible inclusion in the Annual Estimates for 2016/17.

- e. The Clerk tabled, for consideration, a copy of the Income/Expenditure budget monitoring report for the period to 31st October 2015. It was noted that subscriptions and IT support were over budget, due to decisions made after the Estimates had been approved (OVW membership and Microshade remote server), but that all other expenditure is currently within budget.

Resolved to receive and note the Income /Expenditure report to 31/10/2015.

223/15 Conwy CBC:

- a. The Clerk gave a brief verbal report from the Bay Life Officer Group meeting held on 26th October, including updates on the possible purchase of a property on Abergele Road, the Waterfront project (still awaiting decision on funding), the BID ballot, the Masterplan review and improvements to Colwyn Bay station.

b. Colwyn BID:

The Clerk submitted, for information, a copy of the BID Prospectus. It was noted that this would result in a charge of £270 p.a. to the Town Council, based on the current rateable value of the Town Hall.

Resolved to approve a Yes vote in the ballot.

c. The Clerk gave a brief verbal report on the recent Clerks' Network and CCBC/C&TC Forum meetings, held on 22nd October.

It was noted that refresher training is recommended for all Members on the Code of Conduct (last done in 2012) and that there is currently a public consultation on a review of the 'One Conwy' priorities, which members are encouraged to respond to individually.

Resolved to request a copy of the Code of Conduct presentation slides for the Clerk to deliver the presentation at a future Council meeting.

224/15 Welsh Government:

The Clerk submitted, for consideration, the following Welsh Government Consultation/Guidance documents:

a. Alternative Delivery Models in Public Service Delivery: Action Plan for consultation.

It was noted that the action plan establishes a process with stages to assist public bodies to decide if alternative delivery methods may be appropriate for some services. However, the document makes it clear that the Welsh Government is only advocating delivery by a co-op or mutual if this would be an alternative to ceasing providing services entirely.

Resolved to note the consultation document.

b. How do you Measure a Nation's Progress?: Proposals for national indicators to measure progress against the seven well-being goals.

Concern was expressed that the 40 proposed indicators could result in over-regulation and increased monitoring, which would place additional stress on an already stressed public service workforce. However, it was recognised that some measurement is needed to enable the WG to see if progress is being made against the well-being goals.

Resolved to recommend that a general response is submitted to state that the Town Council has concerns about possible over-regulation, over-monitoring and the additional workload that the adoption of 40 national indicators may create for an already stretched and stressed public service workforce.

- c. The Clerk submitted, for information, a call for evidence for the Draft Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill.

Resolved to receive and note the call for evidence.

225/15 Wales Audit Office:

The Clerk submitted a letter outlining the arrangements and fees for the audits for 2015-16 to 2018-19. It was noted that the Town Council external audit fee would reduce from £650 to between £200 and £380.

Resolved to receive the information and welcome the reduction in external audit fees.

226/15 Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales:

The Clerk submitted, for consideration, the draft Annual Report and recommendations of the IRP. It was noted that the draft report includes proposals for two new allowances for members of Town and Community Councils: payment of up to three 'senior salaries' to recognise specific member roles within larger councils (Determination 45) and extending reimbursement of travel costs to include approved duties within the authority's boundaries (Determination 48). It was noted that the Council will need to decide which of the determinations it wishes to adopt for payment in the 2016/17 financial year once the final report has been published (expected February 2016) and before the next Annual Meeting.

Resolved to receive and note the draft report.

227/15 North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority:

The Clerk submitted, for consideration, the Your Service, Your Choice public consultation on services for 2016-17 and beyond.

Resolved to receive and note the consultation document.

228/15 Rhiw Road Site – Gas and Electric Supply Contracts:

The Clerk gave a brief verbal update, following the transfer of the buildings to the Town Council in September and the resulting early termination of the previous CCBC bulk supply contracts for gas and electricity supplies to the site. It was noted that an energy comparison company had been engaged after the supplies had been converted to higher 'out of contract' rates and that the Clerk had contacted the Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee before signing new three year supply contracts for gas and electricity. It was further noted that full details of the quotations received were available on request from the Clerk.

Resolved to endorse the action taken by the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee and retrospectively approve the signing of the new three year energy contracts.

229/15 Pensions and Automatic Enrolment:

The Clerk submitted a recent advice note from the SLCC giving notice of the abolition of contracting out rates of National Insurance from April 2016. It was noted that this will result in an increase in the rates of employee and employer national insurance contributions for staff that are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme with effect from April 2016 and that the Clerk will budget for the expected increase when preparing the salary forecasts for the Annual Estimates for 2016/17.

Resolved to receive and note the SLCC advice note.

230/15 One Voice Wales (OVW):

Cllr H Meredith gave a brief verbal report on the Area Committee meeting held on 14th October 2015. It was noted that this meeting had been held on the evening of the same date as the Larger Councils Committee and that it had not been possible to attend both. The discussion at the meeting had focussed mainly on the new wellbeing duty and complaints by some of the larger councils about the level of subscriptions, which were putting off some councils from joining/remaining in membership.

A discussion took place around whether the Town Council would be able to buy in to an alternative legal service, possibly via the North & Mid Wales Association of Local Councils (N&MWALC) if it were to leave OVW membership next year, but it was noted that this is not the only service provided by OVW and many bodies (including the Welsh Government) now use OVW if they wish to engage or consult with the local council sector and lots of best practice type advice and guidance is also provided by OVW.

Resolved to request that the Clerk approaches CCBC to enquire if it would be possible to 'buy-in' to the legal advice services it provides and/or legal services from neighbouring Local Authorities, in cases where there may be a conflict of interest.

Further resolved to request that Cllr Meredith asks the N&MWALC if it could investigate the cost of procuring an equivalent legal advice service to provide for its member councils.

231/15 Staff Training:

It was noted that the written report from the Clerk on day one of the recent SLCC National Conference and a one day SLCC course on Quotes, Contracts and Tendering will be submitted to the January committee meeting.

232/15 Local Members Ward Allowances:

The Clerk submitted, for consideration, a project proposal from Cllr Sibani Roy.

Resolved to approve the proposal by Cllr Roy to donate £200 from her LMWA to Ysgol Llandrillo yn Rhos (for their school gardening project) and £100 to the Friends of Rhos Parks voluntary group.

233/15 Grants:

- a. The Clerk submitted a request from Cllr D Griffiths for support in principle for a contribution of up to £7,000 towards the costs by CCBC ERF Department of producing a Bill of Quantities and detailed plans for improvement/widening of the promenade at Rhos Point to provide better pedestrian and cycle paths. It was noted that the total cost of these initial works are expected to be around £30,000 and the possible provision of additional parking is also being considered. The Clerk informed members that the Town Council had previously approved a contribution of £5,200 towards a similar scheme put forward by the Rhos on Sea Environmental Action Group, but that these funds had not yet been paid out as the project had later been rejected by the CCBC grants Committee.

Resolved to write to the Head of ERF, CCBC, to confirm that the Town Council currently has £5,200 earmarked towards this project, which it supports in principle, but that detailed updated proposals would need to be submitted before these funds could be released and/or the Town Council could consider increasing its contribution up to £7,000.

- b. It was noted that letters of thanks, reports or evaluations have been received from the following grant recipients (available on request from the Clerk):
 - i. The Benefit Advice Shop
 - ii. Rhos Park Bowling Club

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

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