

Minutes of Finance Committee held at the Civic hall Uppermill 12 May 2021.

Present: Cllrs. B. Lord (CH)

S. Al-Hamdani

G. Sheldon

452. Apologies for absence

Cllrs. Phillips, Hudson and L .Dawson

453. Declarations of Interest

None

454. To agree as a true record Minutes from 14 April 2021.

Agreed.

M. 447 withdrawn (approval of Financial Regulations)

To consider a motion brought by Cllr. Max Woodvine M. 3004 Council meeting November 2020.

455. Motion proposed by Cllr. Woodvine, seconded Cllr. Sheldon

This Council finds itself in an unsustainable financial situation, which has been accelerated and exacerbated by Covid-19, leaving exposed existing financial causes for concern that now need to be addressed.

a. This Council notes to resolve that:

- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the financial situation has worsened.
- It will balance the books for this year, next year and infinitum, not running a deficit; if this is not possible an independent audit of the Budget, setting out an alternative, will be done.
- All options are on the table for discussion no matter how radical and will be heard, discussed and voted upon with courtesy and decorum.
- It must be put on a firm financial footing and avoid raising the precept until all measures to reduce costs and waste have been explored properly and discussed before a Full Meeting.
- Saddleworth Civic Hall must break even by 2021 and make profit going forward.

Cllr. B. Lord stated that the Civic Hall was a facility for residents of Saddleworth.

Cllr. S. Al-Hamdani said that it was the role of the Parish Council to provide funds for the community not make a profit, and that there was no legal responsibility for the Parish Council to make a profit or break even, and that each point did not make sense from a financial point of view. Cllr. Al-Hamdani also stated that due to hardship caused by Covid 19 raising the precept should be avoided if possible. Cllr. Battye suggested that the matter be referred to the Finance Committee. Cllr. Knotts said that efforts had been made to run the

Civic Hall as a business, and there could be room for improvement once the pandemic is over. Cllr. Lancaster agreed with the thrust of the motion, to avoid raising the precept and look at costs associated with the Civic Hall.

Cllr. Byrne formally proposed that the motion be amended and the content of the motion be referred to the Finance Committee for debate and returned to Full Council if major changes were proposed. Cllr. Knotts seconded.

Cllr. Woodvine said that the motion was intended to inform the way Saddleworth Parish Council manages the precept, having a duty to ensure to discuss public money and to ensure how the money is spent and to justify the Parish Councils' existence.

Vote on the original motion as amended.

13 in favour and 2 abstentions.

It was resolved at the council meeting in November 2020 that the motion would be brought before the Finance Committee for consideration.

It was resolved by this committee that Saddleworth Parish Council will make every endeavour to aim to be in profit and to be a cost effective as possible. It was noted that the financial position had not worsened.

456. **Carbon Purchasing Policy**

To consider a policy brought before the environment committee March 2021 by Cllr Al-Hamdani.

Saddleworth Parish Council has pledged to move to zero-carbon by 2030. We are therefore adopting the following approaches to our procurement:

- identify key components of our procurement which are critical to reducing our carbon footprint, and ensuring our purchasing is zero-carbon;
- identify additional components of our procurement which can easily become zero-carbon;
- identify remaining components of our procurement which cannot easily become zero-carbon, and ensure that any emissions through these are offset.

Purchasing

On any new contract which the Council is entering into, the following approaches should be taken:

- suppliers should be requested if the service can be provided on a carbon-neutral basis;
- suppliers should be requested for a copy of their environmental policy;
- should the goods or service not be available on a carbon neutral basis, suppliers should be requested for information on its carbon footprint.

When considering the purchase of any goods or services, as part of the process must include a clear indication of what the carbon footprint of that

purchase is. New purchasing decisions should be clearly compatible with the aim of the Council being carbon neutral by 2030.

Energy use

A primary aspect of a zero-carbon approach is our current energy supply. By 2030, and preferably much sooner, we wish to transfer to a carbon-neutral approach. The Council will therefore not sign any new energy contract which does not deliver carbon neutrality

It was resolved that the proposal from Cllr. Al- Hamdani be an agenda item at the full council in June 2021 for comment. The proposal was accepted by this committee.

457. Review of Financial Regulations

Members to consider a review of Financial Regulations (attached)

It was resolved that the suggestion from the task and Finish Group that the Contract section of the financial regulations be reviewed be accepted and referred to the next council meeting for approval.

458. Review of Statement of Control

Members to consider a review of the Statement of Control Documents (attached)

It was resolved that no amendments were required and that the document be referred to next full council for approval.

459. End of year Accounts

Members to consider that the, as per last year, the end of year accounts to be presented to full Council in the July meeting. This is due to no face to face audits held this year due to Covid restrictions and the absence of the Clerk from the June meeting due to leave.

It was resolved that final accounts would be presented in July to full council for approval following Finance Committee 21 July 2021.

460. Items for the next Agenda (discussion only)

None

Date of next meeting: 21 July 2021 19.00 hrs

