****

# MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF COUNCIL MATTERS

# MONDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL

**Present:** Councillors B Piper (Chair), C Beavis, T Bennett, J Chinnock, J Hannam, D Peters .

**Apologies:** Cllrs Hodgson and Price.

**In Attendance:** C Marlton (Town Clerk) and C Bewley (Finance, HR and Lettings Manager).

# 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair read a statement about how the meeting would be conducted and recorded. The apologies were accepted.

*The Committee will adjourn for the following items:*

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

*The Committee will reconvene to consider the following items:*

**2**.  **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**To approve the minutes of 9th October 2023 and update on any matters arising.**

The minutes were **AGREED** as an accurate record of the proceedings.

# 3. BUDGET MONITOR

**To consider the Budget Monitor including the reserves projection and Christmas budgets.**

This was considered and **AGREED**.

**4. DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN**

**To note any update on the draft Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 and the timeline for Council considerations.**

To **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the timeline for the Strategic Plan and Budget setting is amended as follows:

* Monday 4th December – Draft Strategic Objectives are sent to the Clerk for consideration and they are built into the draft budget.
* Wednesday 6th December – Council Matters Committee agenda and papers are sent out to include a draft budget and draft Strategic Objectives (instead of the wider overall plan due to time constraints).
* Monday 11th December – Council Matters Committee makes recommendations to the January 2024 Full Council on Strategic Objectives, the financial year 2024/25 budget and 2024/25 precept amount.
* Monday 8th January – Full Council sets the Strategic Objectives, budget and precept.
* During January – Task and Finish meetings continue to embed the Strategic Objectives in a wider Strategic Plan.
* February Council Matters – draft Strategic Plan is considered.
* March Full Council – Strategic Plan is considered for adoption.

# 5. INITIAL DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGET

# To consider an initial draft budget for financial year 2024/25.

The draft financial year 2024/25 budget was noted.

**6. PAYMENT CONTRARY TO THE CIVIC BUDGET AND MAYORAL ALLOWANCE POLICY**

**To consider the suspension of the Civic Budget Policy as set out in section b) for the payment of a gift for the recent Vire visit.**

It was **AGREED** to pay the expense claim contrary to policy.

# 7. RISK REGISTER

**To consider a draft Town Council risk register**

The Risk Register was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED.**

# 8. BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

**To consider a draft Town Council business continuity plan.**

The Business Continuity Plan was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED.**

# 9. INCREDIBLE EDIBLES MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING REVIEW

**To review the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Incredible Edibles for the fruit and nut trees in Totnes Cemetery.**

The Incredible Edibles MoU was reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

# 10. ARTS AND EVENTS WORKING GROUP

# To note the minutes of the Council Assets and Public Realm Working Group held on 19th September.

Noted. It was **AGREED** that:

* Items 1 and 2 - £15,000 for Totnes Festival 2024 and £9,000 for the Bridgetown Community Festival be considered as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process. In order to be able to consider this request a full breakdown of the expected event costs is needed, in particular how the Council's funding would be allocated and other confirmed sources of income/grant funding.
* Item 8 - the graffiti patch on the Civic Hall is painted and colour matched on the one side of the gable affected to minimise costs.

# 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

**To note the date of the next meeting of the Council Matters Committee – Monday 11th December 2023 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall.**

Noted.

*The Committee will be asked to* ***RESOLVE*** *to exclude the press and public “by reason of the confidential nature of the business” to be discussed and in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (CONFIDENTIAL by virtue of relating to legal and/or commercial matters, staffing and/or the financial or business affairs of a person or persons other than the Council)*

# 12. BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS (Standing Item)

**To consider the bank statements and reconciliations for October (financial).**

These were reviewed and unanimously **AGREED**.

# 13. STAFF RECRUITMENT

# To consider the recruitment timeline for the green travel coordinator vacancy (staffing).

It was unanimously **AGREED** to defer the recruitment of the Sustainability/Green Travel Officer until the Strategic Objectives and financial year 2024/25 budget is set in January 2024.

# 14. STAFFING BUDGET

**To consider the staffing budget and information on staff roles (staffing and financial).**

# The following points were noted:

#

# The 23 24 pay award and update of the staffing budget accordingly was noted.

# The current projected underspend on financial year 2023/24 staffing due to the resignation of the Sustainability/Green Travel Officer and the vacant role of Community Fundraiser.

# The detailed information on possible savings on the staffing budget from financial year 2024/25 onwards was noted. It was AGREED to consider this detail at December Council Matters Committee and make a recommendation to Full Council in January when the overall budget will be set.

# 15. STAFFING UPDATE

**For any general or urgent updates that required confidential sharing with Councillors (staffing).**

**a. To consider an officer request for a loan.**

The request for a staff loan to buy a parking permit was **AGREED**, subject to the signing of a repayment agreement.

Catherine Marlton

Town Clerk

November 2023