

Minutes of the Special Meeting of Acton Community Council held on Tuesday 6 November 2018 at Acton Community Resource Centre, Overton Way, Acton, Wrexham

Present:

Councillor	Kevin Roberts (Chair)	Councillor	P D Jones (Vice Chair)
	W Baldwin	"	P Lloyd
"	M Davies *	"	G Lowe
"	Mrs A Evans	"	D Picken *
"	R Hardy	"	B Pritchard *
"	Ms S Hope *	"	Mrs D Wallace *
"	Ms S Jarvis	"	Ms L Williams
"	Ms P Kidd *	"	1 vacancy

* Absent

Also Present:

Mrs Carole Roberts, Clerk to the Council

82 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Davies, Sian Hope, Sharon Jarvis, Patricia Kidd, Darren Picken, Basil Pritchard and Debbie Wallace.

83 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No Declarations of Interest were made at this stage of the proceedings:

84 ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2019/20 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Council considered information provided by the Clerk setting out progress against the 2018/19 budget and then commenced the budget setting process for 2019/20, by considering Priorities, Spending Powers, current budget headings and the implications of the Draft report of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales together with any new expenditure the Council wishes to make provision for in the 2019/20 Financial Year

A number of background papers had been circulated with the agenda to assist members in their deliberations, namely:

1. Extract of the Estimates and Precept Setting Minutes from 12 December 2017
2. Copy of the Clerk's Report on the Annual Investment Strategy for 2018/19
3. Copy of the Draft Provisional estimates for 2018/19 submitted to 12 December 2017 Council meeting
4. Copy of the Clerk's Report on the year-end accounts to 31 March 2018 as reported to the April 2018 meeting of the Council
5. SLCC Advice Note on What Can Local Council's Do?
6. SLCC Advice note on Local Council Services and Powers
7. Welsh Government Letter dated 30 November 2017 advising of the Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2018-19
8. Current Year Receipts and Payments by Annual Budget Heading to 31 October 2018
9. Summary of Receipts and Payments by Budget Heading to 31 October 2018
10. Trial Balance for current year as at 31 October 2018

In respect of item 2 above, the Clerk provided information on the Public Sector Deposit Fund as an option to invest earmarked balances for a longer term.

RESOLVED – that the present Investment Strategy be retained and not to take up the option of investing in the Public Sector Deposit Fund.

In respect of item 8 above the Clerk updated members on spending and savings against the current year budget provision.

1. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Members considered the present 2018/19 Budget's expenditure item by item discussing whether the present and other priorities in the coming year are the most cost effective way of spending the Precept and other monies to the best of the Council's ability; and whether within existing Powers and aspirations there is scope to use the monies differently.

During the debate Members considered the first section of the Budget as set out under General Administration. It was accepted there were certain mandatory items such as Employers costs, Insurance, Election and Audit Fees and Website costs. The following matters were highlighted:-

- a. Members Remuneration is a nominal budget provision to reflect the Council's obligations and current decisions in respect of the Independent Remuneration Panel's Determinations for 2018/19. There have been no payments made from this budget since it was established. However a one off payment of £500 will shortly be made for the payroll administration charge to enable establishment of payroll records in order to make the £150 allowance payment to all members of the Council in early 2019.
- b. There will be an overspend on Employers Costs due to the Clerk's hours being temporarily increased to full time for the first three months of the year. There are also implications for future year's budgets once the Administration Post is created (Minute 17 May 2018 refers)
- c. School Crossing patrols: There will be an overspend on this budget due to the impact of the April 2018 pay award to uplift the minimum wage
- d. The other remaining items were optional but the Council wished to retain the existing items of expenditure for the time being. It was noted that expenditure for exceptional or urgent expenditure is permitted from the Council's balances within the limits imposed by the Welsh Government under the provisions of Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

2. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS & OTHER PROJECTS

Members continued to consider the present year's budget expenditure item by item for existing Service Level Agreements and Other Projects. In respect of the existing Service Level Agreements, Members endorsed the Services being provided as representing good value for money and a wish to continue with and renew some of the Service Level Agreements due to end in March 2019. The merits of longer three year Service level Agreements were noted.

In respect of Other Projects the following matters were discussed:

- a. The Acton Community Resource Centre Service Level Agreement requires regular reporting on performance monitoring. The Community Council recently undertook the third of the two year reviews of this ten year Agreement which expires 31 March 2023. (Minute 68 October 2018 refers);
- b. the Agreement signed in 2018 for the Annual Seasonal Park Ranger post at Acton Park has provided for the Community Council to fund this post for three years to September 2020;
- c. **Little Acton Community Centre:** the Community Council agreed in December 2016 to fund to 31 March 2020 the actual costs incurred by Wrexham CBC for the operation of the Little Acton Community Centre to maintain its viability whilst the voluntary Community Group taking over responsibility for the Community Centre conclude their negotiations with Wrexham CBC. Members noted that the Barkers Lane Playgroup were no longer using the premises and in September 18 (minute 63.5 refers) the Community Council had agreed to help with the costs of redecoration/minor repair costs from budget savings to make the Community Centre more attractive to potential Groups wishing to hire the premises. The Voluntary Group's discussions with Wrexham CBC had stalled although there were informal soundings that this would be expedited shortly;
Members felt it important that a small task and finish group should be established to obtain clarification on the basis the Centre (Asset) will be transferred from Wrexham CBC, to either the Voluntary Group or Acton Community Council and confirmation be sought as to whether the building will be demolished if no

transfer takes place. As part of the process a detailed report from Wrexham CBC should be requested to provide full and meaningful information on the running costs, viability and income generation potential for the Centre, together with insurance liability, the condition of the building inside and out particularly regarding the roof, the presence of asbestos, the electrical installation and its general state of repair. In respect of the Asset transfer, what are the options? Costs will be incurred obtaining independent legal advice. The experiences of other nearby Community Councils is valuable and the views of Offa and Rhosddu Community Council on the costs and staffing capacity implications of taking on the Community Centres in their areas should also be sought;

- d. The Young Persons Project budget may be exceeded due to the extension of the 14-18 Youth Club Pilot and payment for the Borrass Park Play sufficiency assessment. The Youth Committee on 30 October 2018 had also agreed to facilitate the purchase of a Snooker Table and Tennis Table for the 14-18 Youth Pilot Project at the Acton Community Resource Centre and had recommended accordingly to the Council;
- e. Crime Prevention projects have included a contribution to the drugs dog operation and the purchase of items to handout at Crime Prevention Awareness events;
- f. The Council's level of Reserves both earmarked and unmarked should be considered as part of the budget setting process. It was noted that unmarked reserves should be held as a working balance and best practice was for Community Councils to hold between three and twelve months of the Council precept as balances.

NEW EXPENDITURE

The following new expenditure items were suggested:

- the Community Council consider providing Sponsorship to local football clubs and Groups; and
- feasibility of providing Community Boards

Members noted that in order to progress and develop the Budget for 2019/20 and to ascertain the Community Council's precept requirements it will now be necessary to obtain costings and work up the various budget requirements before determination.

RESOLVED that

- i) the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Community Council update and prepare budget costings to reflect the debate at this meeting and present the Draft 2019/20 Budget proposals to an early meeting of the Community Council; and*
- ii) The Council agree in principle to set up a small task and finish group to investigate and report on the Little Acton Community Centre transfer of asset taking into account the issues discussed under item 2.b) above and membership of the Task And Finish Group be determined at the Council meeting to be held on 20 November 2018..*

Signed as a correct record this 20th day of November 2018

Chair