

Minutes of the Remote Special Meeting of Acton Community Council held on Tuesday 3 November 2020 at Acton Community Resource Centre, Overton Way, Acton, Wrexham

Present:

Councillor	Kevin Roberts (Chair)	Councillor	R Hardy (Vice Chair)
"	W Baldwin *	"	P Lloyd
"	Mrs C Bettley	"	G Lowe
"	M Davies	"	M Pritchard
"	MS E Doherty	"	T Stanford
"	Ms S Edwards	"	Mrs D Wallice
"	Mrs A Evans *	"	Ms L Williams *
"	Ms S Hope		1 vacancy

* Absent

Also Present:

Ms S Jones and Ms T Brown, Members of the Public
Mrs Carole Roberts, Clerk to the Council

224. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs A Evans and Ms L Williams. It was noted that both apologies were due to a recent bereavement and the Community Council extended its condolences and sympathy to both Members.

RESOLVED – that the apologies be received and accepted.

225. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this stage of the proceedings:-

226. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Clerk indicated she had not received notice of any public questions.

227. REVIEW OF MODEL STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.

Further to Minute 166 June 2020 and the recommendation made by the Council's Internal Auditor, the Council reviewed and consider adoption of the latest Model Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. A copy of the Council's existing documents were discussed in detail together with an updated version of the Model Financial Regulations 2019 for Wales

During the debate Members discussed recording of meetings and the importance of advising on the joining information that remote meetings will be recorded; timetable for preparation of Minutes; the differences between the proposed and existing Financial Regulations together with the level of values to be inserted in square brackets within the Model Financial Regulations 2019 for Wales.

RESOLVED – that

- i) the Council's existing Model Standing Orders 2018 (Wales) as adopted in May 2019 be re-adopted; and***
- ii) The Model Financial Regulations 2019 for Wales be adopted for use by the Community Council with immediate effect, and the existing level of values contained in the February 2019 version of the***

Council's Financial Regulations be transferred and inserted into the document now adopted and in particular

1. for Regulation 4.1 the following limits be applied; for Authority to spend, determination be by the Council for all items over £5,000 and a duly delegated Committee of the Council for items over £1,500 and the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman of the Council or Chairman of the appropriate Committee for any items below £1,500; and

2. for Regulation 4.5 in respect of cases of extreme risk to the delivery of Council services the limit be £1,500.

228. ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2021/22 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Council considered information provided by the Clerk setting out progress against the 2020/21 budget and then commenced the budget setting process for 2021/22 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 2021/22 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 17 December 2019
2. Copy of the Clerk's Report on the Annual Investment Strategy for 2020/21
3. Copy of the Draft Provisional estimates for 2020/21 as agreed at the 17 December 2019 Council meeting
4. Copy of the Clerk's Report on the year-end accounts to 31 March 2020 as reported to 16 June 2020 meeting of the Council
5. SLCC Advice Note on What Can Local Council's Do?
6. One Voice Wales Advice Note on Local Council Services and Powers
7. Welsh Government Letter dated November 2019 advising of the Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2019-20 of £8.32 per elector
8. Current Year Receipts and Payments by Annual Budget Heading to 30 September 2020
9. Detailed Receipts and Payments by Budget Heading to 30 September 2020
10. Trial Balance for current year as at 30 September 2020

In respect of item 8 above the Clerk updated members on spending and savings against the current year budget provision. Having regard to the provisions of Standing Order No.3.w it was noted that a meeting of the Council shall not exceed 2.5 hours. In view of the time limitations Members requested further detailed information for a reconvened meeting on the Budget, Outturn to 31 October 2020 and an explanation of existing reserves.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9.00pm

Minutes of the reconvened Remote Special Meeting of Acton Community Council held on Tuesday 10 November 2020 at Acton Community Resource Centre, Overton Way, Acton, Wrexham

Present:

Councillor	Kevin Roberts (Chair)	Councillor	R Hardy (Vice Chair)
"	W Baldwin	"	P Lloyd
"	Mrs C Bettley	"	G Lowe
"	M Davies	"	M Pritchard
"	MS E Doherty	"	T Stanford *
"	Ms S Edwards	"	Mrs D Wallice
"	Mrs A Evans *	"	Ms L Williams *
"	Ms S Hope		1 vacancy

* Absent

Also Present:

Mrs Carole Roberts, Clerk to the Council

229. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs A Evans, T Stanford and Ms L Williams.

230. ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2021/22 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Clerk had provided the additional information set out below as requested at the adjourned Council Meeting. Members were reminded by its Responsible Financial Officer of the Council's duties as contained within Section 3 of the Council's Financial Regulations and the detailed advice contained within the 2019 Edition of the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - A Practitioners Guide that had been circulated to all members separately particularly concerning Statutory requirements, Proper Accounting and other Practices particularly in respect of budget setting and monitoring and the legal setting aside of monies for specific purposes or saving for future projects:-

1. Projection of known expenditure to 31 March 2021
2. Annual Budget Summary with the final spend for last year against the budget and the spend this financial year to 31 October 2020 against the budget
3. Earmarked Reserves: further Background Information on the Council's Policy agreed in December 2019 and a brief note of what each earmarked reserve is specified for.

Members continued to consider this agenda item. A lengthy debate followed encompassing several areas of the budget and earmarked reserves including:

- Welsh Government proposals to promote Elections and how to become a Councillor, and impose training requirements for all Councillors and the budget provisions that will be needed to meet such costs
- Importance of engaging more with Acton Residents through a consultation exercise before determining parameters for any new spend within the budget. Such new spend should not overlap Wrexham CBC provision
- Future budget provision and spending requirements for the Little Acton Community Centre once the current public consultation and negotiations with Wrexham CBC have been completed
- Possibility of examining whether it is feasible to spend existing earmarked reserves on new Budget headings and arranging borrowing permissions for any expenditure for large future expenditure items that previously had an earmarked reserve (ie Playground provision for replacement equipment)
- The provision for the Remuneration of Members expenses and Employers costs
- The Council should be proactive but mindful that any expenditure should benefit the Acton Community

231. BUDGET PROVISION FOR FUTURE YEARS - COMMUNITY PROJECT/STREETSCENE

Members again discussed the possibility of establishing a new budget for Community Initiatives. However if possible such new expenditure should try to be found from within existing budgets and there should be no precept increase as a result of this proposal and there should be clear parameters and guidelines for such expenditure as there is for Grants to local Organisations.

Members noted that in order to progress and develop the Budget for 2020/21 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) a meeting of the Staffing Committee be held on 8 December 2020 to consider the merits of a suggestion to remove the funding for the Administrative Assistant post currently in the Budget and*

consider whether to take some work off and re prioritise what the Clerk does to create capacity for the proposed new budget items and other administrative work arising from such proposals.

- ii) To relax the S137 Grant funding levels within the existing criteria for the remainder of this financial year having regard to the financial impact of the current pandemic on local Clubs and Organisations and other bodies that work with residents in the Acton Community; and*
- iii) 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 2021/22 Budget proposals to the December 2020 meeting of the Community Council*

**Councillor Kevin Roberts
Presiding Chair**

Signed as a correct record this 17th day of November 2020

Chair