

Minutes of the Finance and Strategic Planning Committee Meeting held on Thursday 12th September 2019 in The Old Court House, Bridge Street at 7.00pm

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr S Garrett

Present:

Cllr P Collins, Cllr C Eastwood, Cllr G Kitching, Cllr J Jones (Chair) and Cllr P Wraight

In attendance:

Mrs E Coe (Town Clerk/RFO) and one member of the public.

2. Declarations of Interest:

None

3. Minutes of previous meeting:

3112919 Cllr Jones proposed approval of the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th July (previously circulated in draft form) as an accurate record, and with one amendment (correction under Pageant Field Pavilion item) was seconded by Cllr Collins with all in favour.

Cllr Jones then signed the minutes.

411219 The Chair proposed an adjournment for the following item, which was agreed.

4. Public Comment:

The member of the public was in attendance in relation to item 2/9. Following questions from Councillors it was noted that if the full amount of local CIL funding was not appropriate, then the situation was that every penny would help towards it. Funding was also being pursued from other sources. However, after the initial first two years further funding would be needed for both job roles to be able to continue.

Someone local who was qualified had been identified for the Mental Wellbeing Worker role.

Cllr Jones felt that the project would not meet the requirements of the Local CIL fund, and it was noted that providing a grant of this amount would require the Precept to be increased considerably.

421219 The Chair proposed to reconvene the meeting, which was agreed.

5. Financial Matters:

➤ **Alpha Finance Report of Income and Expenditure to date:**

The Town Clerk/RFO provided the Alpha Report of Income and Expenditure to date which was considered and the detail including transfers to Ear Marked Reserves and payments awaiting invoices noted, and a copy attached to the file copy of these minutes.

The Town Clerk would publish a copy of the Summary Income and Expenditure Report to date on the www.framlingham.com website, which was noted and agreed.

➤ **Bank balances and bank reconciliations to date:**

The Town Clerk/RFO provided an HSBC printed copy of the bank balances to date, which was noted and a copy attached to the file copy of these minutes.

The Town Clerk/RFO provided details of all the bank reconciliations to date, and it was noted that all the reconciliations were completed and up to date. The Town Clerk/RFO advised that all financial documents were available to Councillors to view during Office hours.

➤ **End of Year Accounts 31st March 2019:**

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that the accounts had been completed with no issues raised and the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) published on the Notice Board and Website as required. This item would be minuted at the next Full Council meeting.

➤ **CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy)**

A response had been received from Philip Ridley regarding the timing of the local CIL payments. Mr Ridley noted that East Suffolk Council (ESC) recognised the positive role Framlingham Town Council has played in the planning process over recent years and the effort made in producing a made Neighbourhood Plan and that it was unfortunate that the Neighbourhood Plan followed the Mount Pleasant and Fairfield Road sites being consented and allowed on appeal respectively. Therefore, Town Council CIL payments from those sites have been limited to 15% and noted that the Town Council was previously capped to a lower amount, by virtue of the Section 59A (7) of The Community Infrastructure Levy regulations. This part of the regulations does not cover part (3) which relates to 25% payments. Therefore, CIL receipts through permissions after the Neighbourhood Plan was made will be at 25% without a cap.

With regard to the request in terms of this October's payment, the regulations state:

Payment periods

59D.— (1) This regulation applies where a charging authority is required to make a payment to a local council under regulation 59A or 59B.

(2) If the charging authority and the local council agree on a timetable for payment, the charging authority must pay the local council in accordance with that timetable.

(3) In all other cases, the charging authority must pay the local council in accordance with the following paragraphs.

(4) The charging authority must make payment in respect of the CIL it receives from 1st April to 30th September in any financial year to the local council by 28th October of that financial year.

(5) The charging authority must make payment in respect of the CIL it receives from 1st October to 31st March in any financial year to the local council by 28th April of the following financial year.

Therefore, through an agreed timetable of payment Mr Ridley's letter informed the Town Council that it is possible to spread payments beyond the current financial year. Mr Ridley advised that ESC are willing to agree an appropriate timetable in this case, in order to maximize the local benefit of this payment, and noted that this is the first instance of such a request, and it is currently Officer's view that this practice will only take place where the Town/Parish also has a Neighbourhood Plan.

In respect of CIL mitigating the effects of development on the town, East Suffolk are acutely aware of the relatively focused housing growth in the town over recent years. This has been of great influence on the CIL spend process and therefore Framlingham has benefited from a total commitment of £877,400 for 3 projects in the town from the main CIL fund. This is largest CIL commitment to any single community in the whole of East Suffolk so far. Overall, including the Town Council payments, CIL funds directed to Framlingham since 2016 have amounted to over £1,316,000 including over £439,000 of 15/25% neighbourhood funding.

Going forward East Suffolk District Council is reviewing its CIL spend process and will be taking an East Suffolk wide approach to the distribution of funds, specific growth led infrastructure needs and the level of priority of projects. Through the CIL spend process ESC hope to be able work closely with Town and Parish Council's to identify infrastructure priorities.

➤ **VAT:**

Cllr Jones reported that he and the Town Clerk/RFO had met with Elysian Associates and it had been recommended that the best way forward would be to become VAT Registered from 1st April 2020. There would be no issue with continuing with the reclaim 126 form for this financial year. Elysian Associates would prepare a cost for assisting with the Registration process and annual support which would be considered at the next meeting.

➤ **Annual review of Direct Debits**

Additions and deletions were agreed.

6. Annual review of Town Council policies:

All current Policies and Documents – list attached

New Policy -addressing Vexatious/ Habitual Complaints

New Policy -Training and Development

New Policy -Communications Strategy

It was agreed for Cllr Wraight and Cllr Eastwood to work with the Town Clerk/RFO on the documents and report back to the meeting in due course.

7. Correspondence:

1/9 E-On Energy

Letter from E-On Energy regarding renewal of fixed Business Plan and Contract which expires on 24th September.

711219 It was agreed to proceed with a Two Year Fixed Plan.

2/9 HOUR Community

Letter from HOUR Community requesting £42,000 of Local CIL to support a Mental Wellbeing Worker and Dementia Support Worker. Information circulated to all committee members.

There followed some discussion.

721219 The Chair proposed an adjournment to allow the member of the public to address the meeting.

Further details were clarified.

The Town Clerk suggested that evidence could be sought on how many people in the town suffer with dementia and mental health issues and if this has increased with new people moving in.

Match funding was also recommended.

731219 The Chair proposed to reconvene the meeting which was agreed.

It was agreed to support the project in principle, but there was a need to find the mechanism to enable the Local CIL fund to be used for this project, as it was felt that it would not meet the criteria.

The Town Clerk was requested to seek clarification on the use of local CIL funds for this type of project with ESC and also if it would meet the criteria for the CIL Regulation 123 list.

3/9 Saxtead Parish Council

Letter requesting that Framlingham Town Council consider taking on the project initiated by Saxtead Parish Council to extend the footpath along the B1119 as the area falls within the boundaries of Framlingham and it feels that the project is too large for it to carry out and Framlingham Town Council might have experience in overcoming the problems involved and have ideas on how to progress this matter along with local CIL funding to support it.

Following consideration it was agreed for the Town Clerk to respond requesting more information on the proposal including evidence and answers to the following questions: Where will the path go? Why is it needed? Who owns the land? Is there any match funding from SPC to support it?

8. Future of Town Council Office:

Cllr Jones and Cllr Collins reported on the meetings held with Paper House Properties (Old Con Club) and Suffolk Libraries IPS.

It was agreed for the Town Clerk to arrange a further meeting with Paper House Properties to discuss further.

9. Action Plan:

Updates: None

Identified CIL projects put forward by Committees:

Lands Committee- Floodlighting on the Skatepark - £11,500

10. St Michael's Rooms:

Cllr Kitching reported on the proposed changes to the funding agreement for St Michael's Rooms noting that the PCC had requested clarification on two matters in order to determine its response.

It was accepted that the PCC is a 'not for profit' organisation and it was agreed that the inclusion of 'not for profit' in the legal agreement was originally for consistency between the Business Plan and Legal Agreement. The Town Clerk was requested to respond.

It was noted that to be legal the £70k local CIL would fund the facilities not the premises. There followed some considerable debate between members. A negotiation meeting was suggested with Councillors and PCC members, which would be organised as soon as possible.

11. Procedure to initiate new projects:

The Project List compiled by Cllr Wraight had been circulated to committee members with the agenda and was considered.

Cllr Jones requested that in order to assist Councillors that Cllr Wraight defines what a project is and the procedure/criteria to underpin the Project List. Cllr Wraight agreed to produce a document for consideration.

12. Strategic Planning/Communication Forum for Councillors:

Thursday 24th October at 7pm

Items for Agenda:

Strategic 3 year Plan – Budget year plus 2 more years – Cllr Jones to provide an update from last year's proposal.

Agenda items put forward by committees and priority to be considered at the next meeting.

13. Matters of report or items for next agenda:

➤ **VAT:**

To consider quotation for registration and ongoing support from Elysian Associates following a meeting held with the consultants on 3rd September

➤ **Annual review of Risk Assessments:**

Town Council Office – Cllr Kitching

Financial Management and Internal Control – Cllr Jones

Credit Card – Cllr Collins

Lone Worker – Cllr Wraight

➤ **Annual Staff Appraisals**

➤ **Grant Applications**

➤ **Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit**

➤ **Annual Review of Assets and Depreciation**

➤ **Procedure and Application form for local CIL applications**

➤ **Consideration of proposal to Full Council for future Town Council Office**

14. Date of next meeting:

Thursday 10th October 2019 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 21.04