

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & COUNCIL MATTERS COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2021 AT 7:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL

PRESENT: Cllrs: S Cursley (Deputy Mayor & Chair), T Robbins, J Rust

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk/RFO, S Luck
Town Clerk Assistant, C Woodland
WCC Cllr: A Bayley
WCC Staff, S Glendinning, A Westwood
SCC Cllr, T Munt
1 member of the public

21/01FCM APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllrs: J Browne, S Johns, N Kennedy, J Osman, P Welch (Mayor)

21/02FCM DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 26th July 2012.

21/03FCM MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER 2021:

Minutes of the previous meeting were proposed, seconded, approved for signing by the Chair.

21/04FCM MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

Chris Simons requested an update on Properties, the non-payment of two rents. The Town Clerk stated the matter was now with the Council's solicitors.

21/05FCM FINANCE

- i. To receive the Finance Reports for September 2021.
The bank statements were checked prior to the meeting by Cllr T Robbins
- ii. To receive the External Audit Report 2020-21.
The Town Clerk presented the report and drew attention to a matter arising. The exercise of public rights box was incorrectly answered and the matter will need to be addressed on the 2022/23 return.
Aside from this, the council have received a clear audit.

21/06FCM UNITARY & ACQUISITIONS

- i. To receive a report on meetings held with SCC unitary group.
The Town Clerk reported on meetings that had been held with SCC and clerks of the five local towns, along with a public meeting for local rural parish councils held in the town hall.
It has been agreed that the five towns and all local parish councils will continue to work together with the shadow Somerset Authority team of officers and councillors.
- ii. The Town Clerk gave a presentation regarding the possible transfer of SCC and MDC assets and services and the implications on staffing costs. He asked members to agree for a presentation to be given to Full Council. If agreed, some cost elements will be added to the budget due to be presented at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.
The precept next year will include any necessary budget increases, for

example: staffing costs, utility bills, election costs, plus also preparation costs for new services.

All members agreed with the proposal to take this to Full Council.

- iii. Implications on the Year 2022-23 precept
The Town Clerk outlined cost implications with delivering the services suggested and possible increases needed in future precepts. The precept will have to increase next year and future years to allow the restructuring to take place.
The anticipated costs will be outlined to Full Council.

SCC Cllr T Munt, who was present at the meeting, was asked for her opinions and observations on the proposals outlined. Cllr Munt was in broad agreement and stressed the need for WCC to take on services that will not be offered by the new authority.

The Town Clerk, Town Clerk Assistant and Officers were thanked for the work carried out so far in preparing for the 'Somerset Unitary'.

21/07FCM ARCHIVES & CIVIC ASSETS

- i. The minutes of the Archives & Civic Assets Committee meeting held on 1st July 2021 were presented to members for information only.
- ii. The Lead Councillor, Cllr Rust, presented the Wells City Archives Five-year conservation plan. All members present were happy with the content and it was agreed to present this plan at Full Council.
- iii. Timetable for the Civic Review.
It was agreed to review in the New Year.

21/08FCM STAFFING

- i. The minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 2nd September 2021 were presented to members for information only.
- ii. The Lead Councillor, Cllr Robbins, stressed with the changes ahead as a result of unitary, there is a need to remember the existing staff have a lot of experience and must also be considered within the process.
For example, new premises will need to be secured for the open spaces team who are currently operating from the old cemetery chapel which is unsuitable and does not provide the staff facilities required.
- iii. The Town Clerk presented a draft staff structure leading up to unitary. Cllr Rust requested the new staff structure be colour coded to show existing staff and where new staff are proposed. Also to show working hours i.e. full or part-time. It was also agreed to retain the title of Town Clerk not 'CEO' as used by other councils.

The Town Clerk suggested the new staff structure will be covered within the Band 4 SALC pay structure, but there would be a need for a benchmark review of salaries in April 2024 when the new staff structure had time to settle down. The salaries of senior staff are decided on the turnover and staffing levels of the council.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the presentation and estimated costings will go to Full Council for consideration.

21/09FCM ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

Alex Westwood, Communications Assistant, asked Cllrs to submit their City of Wells Awards nominations, if they had not already done so. Deadline is 7th Nov.

21/10FCM DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Thursday 11th November, 7pm

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private property report.

Minutes signed by The Chair: **Date:**