

## **Finance and General Purposes Committee**

26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at 7.30pm

All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



### **Minutes**

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this Committee.

#### **Present:**

Councillor T Worgan (Chair)  
Councillor G Roberts (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor N Hards  
Councillor G Ryall  
Councillor D Aragao  
Councillor J Loder  
Councillor J Broadbent

#### **Substitute Member:**

Councillor M Khan

#### **Officers:**

Mrs J Wheeler – Town Clerk  
Mrs L Blake – Deputy Town Clerk

A representative from Thames Valley Play attended the meeting.

#### **147. Apologies**

No apologies were tendered, all members were present.

#### **148. Declarations of interests**

No declarations were made.

#### **149. To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024**

The Chair paged through the minutes. It was proposed by Cllr G Ryall, seconded by Cllr J Loder, and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record and note them as such. The vote was unanimous.

## **150. Questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item**

Cllr T Worgan explained that he intended to propose the Real Living Wage policy for contractors to full Council. There were no other questions.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the representative from Thames Valley Play to address the Committee regarding the Grant Aid application. All members agreed.

### **Public Participation**

Martin Gillett spoke in support of Thames Valley Play's application for £1,000, to contribute to the cost of offering a free to attend family play day event in Didcot. He explained that Oxfordshire Play Association started in 1974 and was set up to support voluntary associations. They now deliver direct projects for communities working with schools and other organisations. They run 10-15 free to attend events each year starting from mid-June through to the end of August. Their aim is to reach as many families as possible, especially those more in need of support and to promote physical and mental well-being through play and activities. This also includes education on health and recycling. Their events are free so that every family can benefit.

Martin explained that many organisations provide funding for these projects. The Didcot event has already received funding from SODC and SOHA. The total cost to hold the free event in Didcot would be more than £4,000.

The Committee thanked Martin for the information.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

## **151. To consider a deferred grant application from Thames Valley Play**

The Committee considered the Thames Valley Play's application.

It was proposed by Cllr J Broadbent, seconded by Cllr T Worgan, and RESOLVED to award the full £1,000 to Thames Valley Play. All members agreed.

- By awarding the full amount, there would be £516 left in the Grant Aid budget, until the end of the financial year.

Martin thanked the Committee for their support and left the meeting.

## **152. To approve the final accounts for December 2023 and January 2024**

The Chair paged through the figures.

Cllr N Hards noted that there was still an amount of £196.80 outstanding from Oxford Liberal Democrats (page 7.42). The Town Clerk explained papers from agenda item 8, budget papers for 2023-2024 showed the amount had been cleared and therefore could have been paid. Cllr T Worgan will investigate this further.

It was proposed by Cllr J Loder, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to approve the final accounts for December 2023 and January 2024. All members agreed.

**153. To receive the budget papers for 2023-2024 with some of February 2024 figures**

The Committee noted the budget papers for 2023-2024 with some of February figures included.

Cllr N Hards noted that the cemetery income (303/3383) had exceeded the projected income and therefore the extra could be 'vired' to other cost centres where needed.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan and RESOLVED to receive the budget papers for 2023-2024 with some of February's figures. All members agreed.

The Chair proposed taking agenda items out of order to allow the Committee to discuss the tender submissions. All members agreed.

**154. To review the grass cutting tenders and consider whether to make a recommendation to full Council**

The Committee reviewed the tenders and discussed the options of cutting some verges whilst leaving other areas 'wild'. The Committee resolved to discuss the content of the grass cutting areas with the Outdoor Services Manager.

It was proposed by Cllr J Broadbent, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND Company A to carry out the grass verge cutting contract for three years at a cost of £27,950.52 per annum (£83,851.55 over three years). This would also be subject to the treatment of different areas to be determined by the Outdoor Services Manager. The vote was unanimous.

**155. To consider the tender responses for the Splash Park at Edmonds Park and make a recommendation to full Council**

The Committee reviewed the tender responses. Whilst Company A did offer added play value, the Committee felt that Company B was the preferred choice due to the flooring options, the decision not to use artificial grass and the fact that the connections to the main pavilion and attenuation tank were included in the quote.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to award the Splash Park construction to Company B, using the option of the specific Splash Park floor tiles, subject to ratification from full Council. Members requested that Officers gather more information on the Plant Room options from the company before a decision was made on the material. The vote was unanimous.

The rest of the meeting followed the original agenda.

**156. To review the end of year forecast 2023-2024 and make recommendations to full Council**

The Committee reviewed the end of year forecast.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Loder, and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND the virements as set out in the report. The vote was unanimous.

This would include:

- The additional amount needed for the grass cutting would be added to the grass cutting cost centre – approximately £14,526 with the service level agreement from OCC.
- A budget of £30,000 would be created for the Splash Park operating costs.
- An additional £6,000 would be added to the Grant Aid budget – the surplus to be rolled at year end.
- An additional £4,000 would be vired to this year's surplus to make a grant sum of £10,000 for Edfest – to also be rolled over at year end.
- An additional £17,000 would be set aside for teen play in Edmonds Park, making a budget of £50,000 for this provision (which includes £33,000 of s106 monies).
- Any sums left over to boost the general reserves.

### **157. To receive the Edmonds Park Community & Sports Pavilion – cost report 9 – and tracker of payments**

The Committee noted the documents from Ridge & Partners. The estimate of the construction costs is £2,290,650 and the overall project cost is £2,332,571. There is a contingency balance of £67,429 out of the total authorised expenditure of £2.4m. NB: This construction cost also includes the consultancy fee from Ridge & Partners of £98,000.

The Town Clerk explained that there are still some issues with the final snagging to be finished before the Town Council receives the keys, but insurance for the new building was in place.

### **158. To note the CIL report for year ending March 2023**

The Committee noted the CIL report. The Town Clerk informed members that the report only covered purchases up to March 2023 – so any CIL expenditure in the current financial year will not feature.

### **159. To approve the extension of the CCTV contract**

Members considered the contract. It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to approve the extension of the CCTV contract. The vote was unanimous.

### **160. To consider approval of the Service Level Agreement with Oxfordshire County Council and a recommendation to full Council**

The Committee considered the agreement which would bring income of £13,424 towards the grass cutting contract. This would leave the sum of £14,526 to find. It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND the approval of the Service Level Agreement to full Council. All members agreed.

### **161. To approve the following payments to full Council to be written off**

The Committee discussed the proposed payments to be written off. It was noted that these were from adhoc bookings rather than regular bookings. It was proposed by Cllr N Hards, seconded by Cllr J Loder, and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND the payments to full Council to be written off. All members agreed.

**162. To discuss the Edfest event and request the £10,000 grant to be held by the King Alfred Community Centre until an Edfest Trust is set up**

Cllr M Khan gave the Committee an overview on the Edfest event and why he needed the sum of £10,000. This sum had already been agreed earlier in the meeting. Cllr M Khan stated that the Committee intends to set up a CIO – Charitable Incorporated Organisation – but if this is not set up in time the King Alfred Association which is a charitable trust has offered to hold the money.

This request will need to be confirmed at full Council.

**163. To consider Expressions of Interest for SODC's Community Infrastructure Levy Pilot Grant Fund**

The Committee considered the grant and possible eligible projects. The Committee suggested applying for a grant for 'improvement of access to existing open space' specifically Ladygrove Lakes, Ladygrove mound, Millennium Woods, Dida Gardens (subject to land owners permission); Mowbray Fields and other DTC facilities. All members agreed.

**164. To note the Council Tax Leaflet 2024 – 2025**

The Committee noted the Council Tax leaflet which would then be sent to SODC for display on their website.

**165. To consider a proposal to re-organise our cost centres**

The Committee considered the report to re-organise the cost centres. The Town Clerk explained that this could potentially simplify the codes which had not been reviewed for a number of years. It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to approve the £2,500 charge from DCK Accounting to re-organise the cost centres. The vote was unanimous.

**166. To review the progress report**

The Committee reviewed the report. Cllr J Broadbent enquired about the status of the Restore project. It was proposed that Restore be invited to the March meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to update members on their plans.

The Town Clerk informed members that following the Extra Ordinary Full Council meeting held on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024, an Extra Ordinary Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting may be needed to further discuss the Ladygrove East development site in more detail.

The meeting closed at 9.22pm.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Chair)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_