

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON
MONDAY 11 JULY 2022 at 7:00 pm**

PRESENT: Biscoe, Rich, Smith, Mrs Stokes, Mrs Swain (Deputy Mayor), Unwin (Chairman) and Webb (Mayor).

Also, in attendance: Roger Gazzard, Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Mrs Jo Trevelyan, Financial Officer

APOLOGIES: Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Mrs Carlyon, Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, Nolan, Roden and Wells.

111 DISCLOSURE OR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Accommodation Working Group (minute 115, page 49, 11.07.2022)

Councillor Webb declared an interest in the above item as a Trustee of the library.

Towns Deal – New Life for City Buildings (minute 116, page 50, 11.07.2022)

Councillor Biscoe declared an interest in the above item as Vice-Chairman and the City Council's representative on the Towns Deal Board.

TIC Report (minute 117, page 51, 11.07.2022)

Councillor Biscoe declared a pecuniary interest in the above item.

112 OPEN SESSION FOR THE ELECTORS OF TRURO

There were no electors of Truro present.

113 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 13 June 2022, having been before Council 27 June 2022, were noted as a correct record.

114 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS APRIL – JUNE 2022

The Town Clerk explained to Members that, as it stands, the City Council was in a good position financially, however, there was still uncertainty over the April 2022 pay award, which was far from being agreed. He informed Members the delay in the works at the Municipal Offices had resulted in a saving of £19k, which had been allocated for repayment of the loan.

The Town Clerk advised that since the estimates were agreed a number of changes to the figures had occurred, either from cost cutting initiatives or simply changes to circumstances, and at the end of June there was a net reduction in commitment of £42k. In addition, in order to mitigate the impact of inflation it was proposed to keep non pay costs to their pre-inflation level, apart from those such as business rates and power costs as there was no alternative but to pay the increased figures. Overall, for the first quarter of the financial year the City Council was £7,310 underspent against the approved estimates.

Councillor Biscoe suggested that provision be made, in next year's budget, to form a reserve for financial pressures which built up over the year. The Town Clerk indicated that if there are enough funds available, this is something which could be considered.

Social Prescribing

A Member queried what the social prescribing funds were used on. The Town Clerk explained that the money was uncommitted and expenditure of the funds was controlled by Councillors and was used for encouraging opportunities for the community, such as the booking of the Moresk Centre etc.

Members agreed that when council funding was committed there needed to be a clear audit trail, so that it could be demonstrated how the expenditure was (legitimately) agreed.

It was agreed that a clear audit trail required a clear set of objectives for any expenditure of uncommitted funds and a report was required to explain how the objectives were being met which should be approved by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Town Clerk agreed to look into this, taking into account audit considerations, and bring a report back to the next meeting.

ASB Officer

It was queried by a Member whether the City Council's contribution to the ASB Officer would now reduce as BID had been successful in obtaining funding for another five years. The Town Clerk indicated that BID would not be a position to contribute this year, however, it was expected for next year.

Idless Nursery

Members felt it would be useful to see a breakdown of works that still needed to be carried out at Idless Nursery and it was agreed by the Town Clerk that details of this, would be emailed to all Members of the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Biscoe, seconded by Councillor Webb, and

RECOMMENDED that:

1. The Report be noted;
2. The Town Clerk produces a report to the Committee.

Jo Trevelyan left the meeting at 7.30pm

115 ACCOMMODATION WORKING GROUP

The Town Clerk informed Members that the Accommodation Working Group met at the Municipal Offices for a site visit ahead of a follow up meeting in the Mayor's Parlour at the library. It was agreed there was a large amount of decoration and other works that needed to be carried out at the Municipal Offices and that the available staff accommodation was very limited and would only allow for a small number of staff to return. It had been suggested at the meeting of the Accommodation Working Group that all staff remain in the library building, which would be made more of a permanent office setting as it currently felt temporary, and the Municipal Offices be used for committee meetings, a Members' lounge and a Parlour for the Mayor to carry out his civic duties with day to day mayoral work remaining in the library building. It was intended that no staff return to the Municipal Offices.

Councillor Rich left the meeting at 7.33pm

Some Members expressed concern over the wording of the Terms of Reference in that it read more in the way of Members of the Working Group making decisions on where office staff should be located etc and felt this should be the decision of the Town Clerk not Members. A Member pointed out that this was, in fact, down to the Town Clerk and

the Accommodation Working Group were there to make decisions on the use of the building, not decide where staff members will sit. It was also felt by some Members, that a number of staff would be required in the Municipal Buildings for the day to day running of the building and that having two Mayor's Parlours was a big expense to the public.

Councillor Rich re-joined the meeting at 7.37pm

It was agreed that many changes needed to be made to the Terms of Reference and it was suggested that any recommendations in the minutes should be put on hold until the Terms of Reference had been reviewed and distributed to the Committee. It was also agreed there was no need for another meeting of the Accommodation Working Group until this had been done.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Swain, seconded by Councillor Biscoe, and

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk revise the Terms of Reference, bringing the revised copy to the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

116 TOWNS DEAL

NEW LIFE FOR CITY BUILDINGS

The Town Clerk explained that in March 2022, the Council resolved to agree a business case that would be submitted to Cornwall Council for this project, and to set up a company to deliver the project. It was agreed the governance documents for the company would be presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

There were four primary documents:-

- Standings Orders Amendment and Governance document;
- Declaration Form CIC 36;
- Articles of Association of the Company;
- Service Agreement.

The Town Clerk informed Members the Standing Order amendment was presented at the last meeting of the Committee and was "sitting on the table" to be discussed at the forthcoming Council.

A Member queried the wording of some of the documents and the Town Clerk explained mostly standard wording was used and that it could be changed at any time. It was agreed the documents needed to be agreed and signed before more time was wasted and more cost was involved.

Regarding the bakery project, the Town Clerk explained that the Town Deal Board had resolved that this proposal be moved from the Harbours & Lemon Quay Project, led by Cornwall Council, to the new Life for City Buildings project which we led. Clarity was being sought from the Towns Deal Board whether we were being instructed to include this as part of the project or whether it would follow the same analysis and review that other proposals would follow. Members felt the City Council should not be instructed to include it.

It was also queried as to why Truro was receiving a lesser sum of Cornwall Council matched funding than the other towns involved, and suggested Cornwall Council explained the basis on which the amounts were agreed. how they divided the money up.

It was proposed by Councillor Webb, seconded by Councillor Unwin (Chairman), and

RECOMMENDED that the documents be provided to the designate board for approval/comment and then considered by Council.

117 TIC (TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE) REPORT

The Town Clerk explained the report was very comprehensive showing a rise in figures and footfall. There had been a range of summer activities arranged, involving four departments from the City Council which the Town Clerk thought was excellent. A Member pointed out that the cost of running the TIC was still very high and discussion took place as to whether the TIC would function as well in a different location, which could be cheaper. It was thought a review of figures would be useful. Members commented the sales in the shop was only a part of the work that was carried out at the TIC and the figures should not reflect this. Members felt the staff at the TIC do an excellent job and have worked very hard throughout a difficult time.

It was proposed by Councillor Biscoe, seconded by Councillor Webb, and

RECOMMENDED that the staff at the TIC are congratulated on their hard work throughout a very difficult time and are informed they have the support of the Councillors.

118 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

The meeting closed at 8.37pm.

CHAIRMAN