

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON
MONDAY 16 JANUARY 2023 at 7:00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors Biscoe, Mrs Carlyon, Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, Nolan, Roden (Chairman), Rich, Mrs Swain (Deputy Mayor), Unwin, Webb (Mayor) and Wells.

Also, in attendance: Roger Gazzard, Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer
Mrs Jo Trevelyan, Financial Officer
Tamsin Thomas, Community Safety Manager, Cornwall Council

APOLOGIES: Apologies of absence were received from Councillors Smith and Mrs Stokes.

266 DISCLOSURES OR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Estimates 2023/2024 (minute 263, page ,115)

Councillor Wells declared an interest in the above item as Trustee and Director of Young People Cornwall who received a grant, mentioned in the estimates.

267 OPEN SESSION FOR THE ELECTORS OF TRURO

There were no electors of Truro present.

268 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES MINUTES

Accuracy Minutes

It was proposed by Councillor Swain, seconded by Councillor Roden, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 21st November 2022, together with confidential minute are signed as a correct record.

269 DRAFT ESTIMATES 2023/2024

(i) It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Swain, seconded by Councillor Roden, and

RESOLVED that the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Parks and Amenities Committee, held on 9th January 2023, be approved.

(ii) The Town Clerk introduced Tamsin Thomas, Community Safety Officer from Cornwall Council to the Committee and explained she was attending the meeting to provide an update on the position regarding the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer (ASBO). The Town Clerk explained that the City Council agreed, last January, to partly fund the post which would end on 31st July. He explained that Truro BID (Business Improvement District), did not contribute last year as they had not secured funding and that BID had indicated they would contribute this year if they did receive funding. However, on speaking to Alun Jones of BID, although supportive of the ASBO, BID was considering contributing towards the cost of a Police Officer or security staff instead. Members expressed concerns that a Police Officer may be placed outside of Truro if the need arose, and that security staff would have fewer powers than an ASBO. Members agreed the work the ASBO was carrying out was excellent and members of the public and business owners had spoken positively about his presence in the City. Members strongly agreed that BID should be contributing towards the cost of this post after securing funding and felt it was important for the City Council and Truro BID to maintain a good working relationship. The Town Clerk advised that the BID operating committee, which would make the

decision, was meeting on the 25th January. He would attend. It was agreed the Town Clerk would write a letter seeking financial support from BID towards the costs of this post and report the decision of the BID committee to the full Council meeting on the 30th January.

Ms Thomas left the meeting at 7.40pm.

The Town Clerk presented the Estimates to the Committee and explained that it was going to be a difficult year financially for the City Council as inflation costs were higher than predicted, resulting in much higher supplier costs and the higher than predicted pay award.

The Town Clerk explained there were two options for reducing the precept, however, option 2 proposed a higher risk to the City Council.

Following discussions and after considering options 1 and 2, Members did not approve the following reductions, due to the increased risk:

Budget	£'000	Report reference/Note
Reduce Contingency for April 2023 NJC pay Award	13	Page 16 Option 2
Shared Prosperity Grant	25	Page 16 Option 2 Members agreed this would be deferred until the Full Council meeting on 30 th January 2023 to allow time for the outcome of the City Council's grant application to be received.
Anti-Social Behaviour officer	15	Page 16 Option 2 Members agreed this would be deferred for discussion at the Full Council meeting on 30 th January 2023 and the Town Clerk would write a letter and meet with Alun Jones, BID Manager, in the meantime to discuss their contribution to this post and explain the importance of maintaining a good working relationship with the City Council and themselves.
Total Reductions	53	

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Roden, and

RECOMMENDED to Council that:

1. The following Precept Reductions be approved:

Budget	£'000	Report Reference/Note
Remove additional training budget	10	Page 15 Option 1
Not Appoint Customer Services Apprentice	11	Page 16 Option 1

Not appoint Part-time Assistant	5	Page 16 Option 1 Members felt it was important the Town Clerk received administration support and agreed an apprentice or part time administration assistant should be hired with a budget of £11k instead of £16k.
Contribution to Community Projects Fund	6	Page 16 Option 1
Contribution to Building Fund	3	Page 16 Option 1 A Member commented that whilst the contribution was being removed this financial year, it should continue in the next financial year.
Reduce price inflation from 10% to 8%	23	Page 16 Option 1
Social Prescribing	6	Page 16 Option 2
Overtime reduction	8	Page 16 Option 2
Total Reductions	72	

2. that the estimates for 2023-24 be approved as amended
3. that the financial forecasts for 2024-25 and 2025-26 be agreed in principle.
4. that the contributions to the Committee Funds be approved as amended
5. the charges be approved

(iii) **Operations Plan – Idless Nursery**

A Member queried the latest position regarding the greenhouse and the Town Clerk confirmed that a tender for a new greenhouse was going out on 25th January and a decision would then be made.

It was proposed by Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Roden, and

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

(iv) **Operations Plan – Boscawen Park**

It was commented by a Member that the amount of profit predicted for the new café seemed optimistic. The Town Clerk explained he felt the figure was realistic, given the proposed new facilities e.g., more seating, takeaway options etc, compared to what was currently on offer. It was suggested by a Member that the Town Clerk considered who would lead on the marketing for Boscawen Park.

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

RECOMMENDED that the report be noted.

270 INTERIM AUDIT REPORT

The Town Clerk explained that audit reports were carried out twice a year by Hudson Accounting Ltd and that he had reviewed the report and felt it was excellent. The Mayor expressed that thanks should be given to the finance team for their work on this. With regards to the recommendation on the last page of the report, Members agreed the 'Timescale/Responsibility' column should read 'Parks and Amenities Manager to review' rather than left blank.

It was proposed by Councillor Roden, seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, and

RECOMMENDED that the Interim Audit Report be noted, and thanks given to Jo Trevelyan, Liz Ayres and Jo Wheildon in the finance team for their work on this.

271 ACCOMMODATION WORKING GROUP (Appendix A)

The Town Clerk explained he was asked to review the terms of reference of the Working Group following a meeting of the group last summer. On reviewing the revised terms of reference, Members felt decisions on where people work and where they are deployed were management matters, so should be delegated to the Town Clerk and the 'Aims' of the terms of reference should be amended to reflect this. It was suggested the Working Group should be wound up, no later than January 2025, once its aims and responsibilities were fulfilled. It was also agreed the words 'and members of the public/local businesses' needed to be removed from first sentence under 'Membership'.

The Town Clerk informed Members he had commissioned a Building Condition Survey on the Municipal Offices which needed to be shared with Members of the Working Group.

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, and

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk carries out the suggested amendments to the Terms of Reference and reports back to Full Council on 30th January 2023 with a revised draft and a meeting of the Working Group be arranged as soon as possible.

272 TOWNS FUND – BOSCAWEN PARK DEVELOPMENT

The Town Clerk reminded Members that in March 2022 the Council approved the Business Case for the above project to be submitted to Cornwall Council for consideration by both Cornwall Council and the Government. In September 2022 the City Council was informed that the project had been approved by both organisations and moved to the next stage which involved Cornwall Council being satisfied about the continued viability of the project. He explained one of their major requirements was confirmation that the non-Towns Fund grant sources of funding were confirmed which left the Public Work Loans Board (PWLB) loan. He explained the PWLB required a resolution to be a full Council decision and therefore would be a separate agenda item on the Council agenda.

It was proposed by Councillor Biscoe, seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, and

RECOMMENDED Council seeks the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of £1.947m over the borrowing term of 50 years for the development of Boscawen Park. The annual loan repayments will come to around £105k (as at 10th January 2023 Annuity with Fixed Interest Rate of 4.93%). The Business Case for the project concludes that this cost will be met from income generated by the project.

Councillor Mrs Carlyon wished for her name to be recorded as having voted against the above recommendation.

273 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

The meeting closed at 9.27pm.

CHAIRMAN

Truro City Council Accommodation Working Group Terms of Reference (approved 30th January 2023)



Truro City Council

Purpose

The Working Group has the core purpose to consider options for the use of the Municipal Offices buildings once they are available for re-use and to oversee the return to the building.

Aims and Responsibilities:

The aims of the Working Group are:

- Consider and make recommendations to the Finance & General Purposes committee regarding future use, management arrangements and adaptations to the Municipal Offices, and other associated building works.
- To consider accommodation and facilities for the Mayor and Councillors at the Municipal Offices and/or Library and make recommendations to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.
- To oversee the re-commissioning of the Municipal offices.
- To explore potential external funding options to carry out refurbishments.
- To work with the Library Trustees in any necessary updating or changes to the Trust Deed in relation to the use of the Library building.

Authority:

Set up in accordance with Standing Order 5 and although it is a working party of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, the group will comprise of members across the entire council. The group will report back to the Finance & General Purposes Committee with recommendations, as necessary.

Membership:

The membership of the group will draw on capable and enthusiastic Councillors. At a minimum, membership of the group will include the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the Mayor (ex-officio) and Deputy Mayor (ex-officio), in accordance with Procedural Guidance 5(i). The group's number will not exceed seven councillors.

A Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be appointed at the initial meeting of the Group.

Meeting schedule and ways of working:

The group is a task and finish group. It will hold at least one meeting a month (unless the chairman decides that the agenda does not warrant a meeting), and report at least quarterly to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

The Group will decide how best to meet; digital platforms are permitted.

The working group will be wound up once its aims and responsibilities are fulfilled and no later than January 2025.