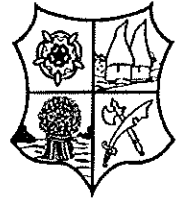


ALTON Town Council



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Town Hall
Market Square
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1HD

Town Clerk: Mrs Leah Coney

22nd July 2019

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** in the Town Hall, Market Square, Alton on **Wednesday 31st July 2019 at 7.00pm** when the under mentioned business will be transacted.

There will be a networking café at 6:30pm open to the public where Councillors will be available to chat with residents over items of interest.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Leah Coney
Town Clerk

To: Members of the Policy and Resources Committee

Councillor Pam Jones (Chair)
Councillor Suzie Burns (Vice Chair)
Councillor Matthew Bayliss
Councillor Pam Bradford
Councillor Graham Titterington
Councillor Gideon Cristofoli
Councillor Graham Hill

Copied to: All other Councillors for information

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 31st JULY 2019

AGENDA

- 1 Chairman's announcements
- 2 Apologies for absence
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2019
- 4 Declarations of Interests - Councillors are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest which they may have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, or vote on any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest. You must withdraw from the room when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.
- 5 To consider any requests for Dispensations to allow Councillors with pecuniary interests to speak and vote
- 6 Questions to the Committee (including those received in writing)
- 7 Updates i) Town Wide Wi-Fi project
ii) Community Facility Update. (Brewery Site)
iii) Assembly Rooms report
- 8 LGPS Pension scheme consultation outcomes.
- 9 Climate Change discussion group.

1.1, What was the likely delay to be in regards to a decision on the Community Facility (Agenda Item 12.ii refers). Councillor Hill stated he had been advised that a minor delay of a few weeks was anticipated. The Committee recognised the concern raised but wished to re-assure there would be only a nominal postponement and the overall timeframe remains as it was.

1.2. What was being done regarding the “run off” from the fields across Gilbert White Way which culminated in thick mud residue along the footpath from Curlews and along the back of Wooteys School. Councillor Hill confirmed that the responsibility was with EHDC and the contract monitoring officer had inspected the location and would be taking action for it to be cleared and regular monitoring to be put in place.

2. Councillor Allan Chick asked whether Cala Homes had signed the contract for the former Molson Coors site. Councillor Phillips confirmed that they have an option to purchase in place.

199 Community Grants 2019/20

Members received presentations from nine of the ten applicants who had applied to the Town Council for grant funding (which took place prior to the commencement of the Policy & Resource Committee) and had provided councillors with the opportunity to seek further information on the background to the applications received.

Councillors in considering the applications before them agreed that all of the applications fully complied with Alton Town Council’s governance for the use of public monies in awarding grants.

On the proposal of Councillor Dean Paul Phillips, seconded by Councillor Alex Hunt it was

RESOLVED to award grants in the following sums:

- 1. Victim Support – £ 0**
- 2. Wey Valley Radio - £675**
- 3. Alton Buckle Local Children’s Partnership - £10,000**
- 4. Alton Community Centre - £4,000**
- 5. Alton Counselling Services - £750**
- 6. Basingstoke & Alton Cardiac Rehab Charity - £0**
- 7. Bushy Leaze - £9,075**
- 8. Challengers - £0**
- 9. Citizens Advice East Hampshire - £9,000**
- 10. Home-Start Hampshire - £1,500**

The Town Clerk confirmed to members that grants awarded in excess of £5,000 would go before Full Council on 6th February for ratification.

200 Draft Budget and Precept 2019/20

Members received with their Agenda papers a copy of the options for the proposed budget and precept request for 2019/20 which included a spreadsheet of the mid-year revised budget for 2018/19 together with a supplementary explanations sheet and a copy of the current balance sheet. The mid-year budget contains no overall change in the income versus expenditure but reflects a number of adjustments between cost codes within the approved budget which are required to accurately reflect the likely actuals for each cost code for the remainder of the year and to assist with for future budgeting. (in accordance with Financial Regulation 4.2)

Following the Budget Workshop on the 12th December a single option was presented for approval of an increase of 5% in Band "D" which represented an increase of £4.56 per annum per household (8.8p per week).

On the proposal of Councillor Dean Paul Phillips, seconded by Councillor Pam Jones it was

RESOLVED to
Approve the budget and precept request for 2019/20 to be ratified by Full Council on 6th February 2019.

On the proposal of Councillor Dean Paul Phillips, seconded by Councillor Peter Hicks it was

RESOLVED to
Approve the revised budget for 2018/19 to enable the appropriate virements to be actioned.

201 Internal Auditors Report Q2 and Q3

Members noted the Internal Auditors Report before them for review and approval.

On the proposal of Councillor Graham Hill, seconded by Councillor Peter Hicks it was

RESOLVED to
Approve the Internal Auditors Report for Q2 and Q3

202 Transfer to CCLA Property Fund

Members were asked to approve the investment of £26,099 to the CCLA Property Fund. This amount represents the last annual rent payment made Alton Football Club which is earmarked for the replacement surface on the 3G pitch, together with the interest accrued in 2017/2018 of £3,983 which is currently sitting as an earmarked reserve. Members further noted that the minimum investment to the fund is £25,000.

On the proposal of Councillor Dean Paul Phillips, seconded by Councillor Pam Jones, it was

RESOLVED
To approve the Transfer of £26,099 to the CCLA Property Fund which represents the last annual rent payment made by Alton Football Club earmarked for the replacement surface on the 3G pitch and £3,983 interest accrued in 2017/2018.

203 Non Financial Risk Assessments for review and approval

Members reviewed the current non-financial risk assessment included within their bundles being a summary document sourced from a number of files which were made available for viewing at the meeting and contain full details relating to the following items:

Health & Safety Policy and Procedures
Health and Safety Logs
Individual Risk Assessments – General and Events
Asbestos Surveys
Electrical Systems Log Book
COSHH data Sheets
Fire Risk Assessments.
Legionella Risk Assessment.

On the proposal of Councillor Dean Paul Phillips, seconded by Councillor Peter Hicks, it was

RESOLVED
To approve the non-financial risk assessment for ratification by Full Council

204 Updates

(i) Town Wide Wi-Fi project:

Members received a report confirming the installation by InTechnology, appointed to install the free to access public Wi-Fi for the Town Centre at a cost of £39,995 (including three years maintenance, analytics and line rental.) The Wi-Fi is now live and a press release has been issued. Members noted the Town Clerks report on the financials that had been agreed, noting the requirement for a drawdown of £14,152 from the 2018/19 budgeted Economic Development Project pot.

On the proposal of Councillor Dean Paul Phillips, seconded by Councillor Alex Hunt, it was

RESOLVED to
Approve the drawdown of £14,152 from the Economic Development Reserve for the Town Wide Wi-Fi project.

(ii) Community Facility Update (Brewery Site)

The second round public consultation was due to be sent out to residents during January 2019 following the additional workshop session held with key stakeholders and CALA Homes at the Assembly Rooms in November. However, since that time the dates have been released for the Local Plan public consultation which would have overlapped with the timeframe mapped for the community facility second round survey. It has therefore been decided to run this consultation after the Local Plan consultation has closed to avoid any confusion.

NOTED

205 Assembly Rooms Report

Members noted the Monitoring Report Form and noted that Monitoring meetings continue on a quarterly basis in line with the Collaboration Agreement with Alton Community Association (Schedule 10) together with monthly reporting. Members were pleased to learn of a further

new long term hirer had been secured for the Upper Room on a Licence to Occupy and this agreement commenced at the beginning of January. The Upper Room was redecorated before Christmas ready for the new hirer. The Committee noted that the income for the Assembly Rooms, once the long terms hirers were excluded, was actually decreasing although the long term hirers were ensuring the figures overall remained steady. They Committee will continue to keep this under review and requested the Clerk look at the Saturday hiring figures as the perception was that it was the one off Saturday hirings which were decreasing.

NOTED

206 Business Continuity Plan

Members received a draft Business Continuity Plan for the Council to consider. As detailed in the document this is not a statutory requirement for local councils but demonstrates good practice in ensuring that the Council has contingencies in place in the case of disruption and can mitigate any risks arising as a result.

On the proposal of Councillor Matthew Bayliss, seconded by Councillor Alex Hunt, it was

RESOLVED

To approve the Business Continuity Plan as presented without amendment

The meeting finished at 8.10 p.m

ALTON TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 31st JULY 2019

REPORTS BY THE TOWN CLERK

ITEM 7 UPDATES

(i) Town Wide Wi-Fi project

FOR INFORMATION

Following the installation of the town wide Wi-Fi, Members will find in their bundles details of the statistics to date on usage of the service, which is encouraging.

(ii) Community Facility Update (Brewery Site)

Officers have met with District Council colleagues in respect of the lack of proposed community facilities on the brewery site development as put forward by CALA homes at the recent public exhibition and indeed the financial offer proposed in its place. Officers are currently trying to secure a meeting with CALA home and Molson Coors to address this.

(iii) Assembly Rooms Report

Monitoring meetings continue on a quarterly basis in line with the Collaboration Agreement with Alton Community Association (Schedule 10) together with monthly reporting. The latest monitoring meeting is scheduled to be held on the 30th July 2019. Bookings for the first quarter of 2019/20 total £7,757.53 which is approximately £500 down on the previous year but under the new invoicing arrangement for staffing costs, this is around £700 down on this time last year, so overall the position is stable. The current collaboration agreement with the Community Centre for the Assembly Rooms is due to end on the 31st March 2020 and the Community Centre will need to indicate their intentions to extend or renew the agreement this coming September so we have six months to finalise arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are invited to note the updates as presented.

ITEM 8 LGPS PENSION SCHEME CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

FOR INFORMATION

Detailed below is the response submitted by the Town Clerk to the recent consultation carried out by Hampshire County Council in respect of the Local Government Pension scheme and the proposal to break up the Scheduled Bodies Group

- 1) *The proposed Parish Council fund looks too small to be a viable pension scheme in its own right*
- 2) *We have reservations about the long term cost implications of these changes and alarm bells start ringing when advisors suggests members of the scheme should look at whether to remain in the scheme or not due to the cost implications of liability going forward by remaining in the scheme. Is the intention to try and get town and parish councils to exit?*

- 3) *Whilst the consultation has stated there will be a cap any increase for the first three years to lessen the initial impact this only adds to the burden in years to come*
- 4) *This is only being put forward now because of a very short term improvement in the funding position over the last three years. If it can improve that much in three years it can potentially go down by the same percentage over the next three.*
- 5) *Without evidence of what the position would be if we stayed in the existing arrangement it is difficult to assess the principles of the consultation.*
- 6) *The proposal lumps larger councils i.e those with 15+ employees in the scheme with smaller ones with one or two employees. The larger councils generally have a lower age profile of employees but will be worse affected as their liability overall is less but they are lumped in with smaller councils whose liability is greater because of the higher age profile, but we will all be paying the same percentage.*
- 7) *Whilst HCC were keen to say that this was a transparent process there was no evidence presented of options they have discounted and nor was there any forecasting of the new rates for parishes should we stay in the existing regime. We were advised it has not been considered which provokes the question as to whether this is a genuine consultation or not.*
- 8) *We would asked if Councils, particularly those with larger numbers of employees in the scheme or deferred/retired could be dealt with in the same way as the proposal for others currently in the Scheduled Body Group and have an individual assessment of their contribution levels to ensure it is fair but we were advised we could put that in our response but it was not likely to be considered (again a question over whether therefore this is a genuine consultation)*

Hampshire County Council have subsequently provided feedback and produced an FAQs which is included in Members Supplementary Bundles.

Feedback from the Pension Fund Panel and Board meeting on 12 July

The Pension Fund Panel and Board (PFPB) have approved the recommendations set out in the report Governance: Proposed changes to the current grouping arrangements in the Fund As a result of the feedback received from TPCs, the PFPB agreed an additional proposal to allow a TPC to choose not to be part of the TPC pool but instead elect to be given an individual contribution rate.

This means that at the 2019 valuation, the Fund Actuary will create a pool of Town and Parish Councils (TPCs) and all TPCs will be part of this pool unless an election is made by a TPC to instead be given an individual contribution rate.

An election to receive an individual employer rate must be received by Pension Services by 15 August 2019. If an election is not made by this date, the TPC will become part of the pool. A further opportunity to leave the pool will be made before each subsequent valuation. Once a TPC has been given an individual employer rate it is not possible for that employer to subsequently join the TPC pool. TPCs should therefore consider the likely impact of this on their contribution rate at future valuations i.e. in the knowledge that the age profile of its members will change over time meaning that contribution rates could increase as well as decrease.

Any TPC wishing to make an election to receive an individual contribution rate, rather than become part of the TPC pool at this valuation, should send a letter on headed paper signed by the high level contact for that TPC to pensions.employer@hants.gov.uk by 15 August 2019.

Consultation responses – frequently asked questions

The consultation responses received from TPCs included a number of questions about the impact of the proposed changes. Based on these questions, an FAQ has been attached to this email. No

consultation response will be replied to on an individual basis and any TPC wishing to ask further questions about the LGPS should do so in the normal way by contacting the Employer Services team.

Next steps

You are invited to attend the Annual Employer Meeting (AEM) which is being held on Friday 18 October and includes an update from the Fund Actuary on the outcomes of the 2019 triennial valuation. Although individual employer results will not be available at the AEM, employers will get a better idea of the funding level, and therefore implications for contribution rates from 1 April 2020.

Following the AEM, the draft Funding Strategy Statement, which will contain the necessary revisions to reflect the new funding structure for employers, will be issued to all employers for their feedback prior to its approval by the Pension Fund Panel and Board at their December meeting. Individual employer rates will be issued to employers by the end of December 2019, and this information will also include an indicative exit position for each employer based on the 2019 valuation results.

It is pleasing that the consultation has listened to the concerns raised about the potential increased contributions arising from membership of a much smaller overall TPC pool and has put forward the option for councils to have their own individual employer rate. This may be of benefit for larger employers and those with a lower average age demographic but the actual rates have yet to be published, so at this stage it would not be possible to determine by the 15th August whether it would be advantageous to make an election to leave the “pool”. It is therefore recommended that at this valuation ATC remains in the overall PTC pool at this time.

RECOMMENDATION: Members are requested to approve remaining in the Town and Parish Council Pool for the 2019 valuation but will review the position at the next valuation once the contributions rates of the TPC pool are able to be assessed.

ITEM 9 CLIMATE CHANGE DISCUSSION

FOR INFORMATION

Attending the evening’s main agenda item discussion, we welcome colleagues from Energy Alton (EA) and Alton Climate Awareness Network (ACAN):

Eleanor Hill, John Hubbard, Lesley Willis, Philippa Brealey, Jenny Griffiths and Charlotte Wigzell.

BACKGROUND

Councillor Boxall submitted a paper to the Town Clerk earlier this month detailing a number of climate change motions for the Council to consider. Whilst, according to the South East Climate Alliance, in a press release on the 22nd July, over 50% of local Councils in the South East have now declared a climate emergency (this is District and County authorities) the figures for Town and Parish Councils are currently unknown. Limited research from the Town Clerk has noted that some Towns, such as Frome have been very high profile but many who have passed climate change motions have subsequently struggled to navigate the myriad of information available and have knee jerk reacted, working with limited resources and in potential danger of carrying out no more than a public relations and promotional exercise which ultimately has limited impact and lacks substance.

It is clearly evident that this is an issue which is not only here to stay but according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has a hard deadline of 2020, stressing how important the next 12 months will be in tackling climate change. 2020 also sees Alton and the surrounding area commemorate the 300th birthday of possibly the world's first ecologist and environmentalist Gilbert White; a fitting time to seek to strive to respect and protect the environment around us and listen to his words which are as relevant today as 300 years ago.

To ensure that Alton Town Council is in the best possible position to make informed decisions, allocate required resources and be able to affect lasting change and not just make empty statements or pledges, it was felt important to have a round table discussion, look at the facts.

This session is therefore designed to:

- Inform Members as to the background to the motion, (paper by Cllr Boxall, enclosed in Supplementary Bundles)
- Consider a short presentation by EA and ACAN on the views of Altonians gained through a recent survey. (also detailed in Supplementary Bundles)
- Consider what the Council would need to do to become carbon neutral or zero carbon, and ascertaining its current carbon footprint.
- Understand the scope of the remit, whether it is contained within the Council's own estate or a wider geographical area of the Town
- Gain an understanding of what tools will be needed to achieve this, officer time and finances
- Identifying the "big ticket" items for reducing our emissions, such as property improvements, vehicle and machinery changes. Look at options for off-setting.
- Identifying community projects – those which may not have a large or direct impact on our carbon footprint but are a hook to interest a wider audience in the conversation, though looking at subjects such as waste reduction, reduced reliance on car use, thinking about shopping choices and holiday choices, recycling etc..

By the end of this session Members should be comfortable that the motion to go before Full Council is well understood, costed and resourced in order to ensure that decisions made are impactful and viable.

ENERGY ALTON INTRODUCTORY PAPER.

With a team of volunteer surveyors, Energy Alton has undertaken a survey of 200 Alton Residents' views on the climate crisis. The results show a high level of concern and offer a mandate for action by local and national government.

To explain, Energy Alton has long had a work programme on climate change, and the origins of the survey project predate the setting up of Alton Climate Action & Network – which was initiated by Energy Alton in partnership with others.

Included in Members bundles is a 4 page report, summarised below.

The headlines are

- 92% of those surveyed are convinced that the world's climate is changing: 66% very and 26% fairly convinced.
- 90% of respondents are worried about climate change: 44% very and 46% fairly worried.

- Concern about climate change is higher amongst Alton residents than the national average. The Dept. of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Public Attitudes Tracker published data in May 2019 that 80% of people were concerned about climate change (45% fairly concerned and 35% very concerned).
- Nearly half (45%) said that they are prepared to change their behaviour “a lot” to limit climate change; a further 44% said they were prepared to change “a little”.
- In response to the question, “Who or what is most likely to help you do more to reduce your carbon emissions?” the top choice was government legislation, the second choice was TV programmes and the third was newspapers and magazines. Social media was next on the list.

Members of EA and ACAN will give members a brief overview of the findings of the survey.

By way of further introduction to this item the following web-links may be of interest to Members in advance of the meeting. In addition, the Town Council Grounds and Property Administrator, as part of her research for her Certificate in Local Council Administration has written a note on this subject including some sample readings of air quality around the town which is also included in Members bundles.

www.energyalton.org.uk

<https://www.frometowncouncil.gov.uk/your-community/resilience>

<https://seclimatealliance.uk/>

<https://www.winacc.org.uk/>

https://www.easthants.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/East_Hants_ASR_2018.pdf

<https://democracy.winchester.gov.uk/documents/g2058/Public%20reports%20pack%2005th-Jun-2019%2009.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10> (agenda item 7)