

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2019 at 7:00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors Wells (Chairman), Biscoe, Mrs Carlyon, Mrs Cox, Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, Mrs Neale, Rich, Roden, Ms Southcombe and Mrs Stokes

Also, in attendance: Councillor Mrs Allen, Roger Gazzard, Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and Ms Joanne Trevelyan, Financial Officer.

APOLOGIES: An apology of absence was received from Councillor Smith

334 DISCLOSURE OR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs Carlyon and Ms Southcombe (Mayor) declared an interest in matters relating to Truro Library on the grounds of being trustees of the Central Technical Schools for Cornwall.

335 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 14 January 2019, having been before Council on 28 January 2019, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**336 TOWN CLERK/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS 2018/2019**

(Appendix A)

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer presented the Finance and General Purposes Committee members with the management accounts for the end of January highlighting the underspend of £16k against the budget. He highlighted the slight difference that would decrease towards the year end however, he felt confident that the end of year financial position would be as estimated.

Councillor Mrs Neale requested information regarding the £5000 allocated for the Community Navigator (3040). The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the City Council had agreed to pay £20k over two years; £5k for 2018/19 as the role started half way through the year, £10K the next year and £5k the following year. This would be funded by the Contribution Fund that began with £9k and £5k had been added to it; this had not affected the precept.

Councillor Mrs Carlyon requested information regarding the distribution of the Truro Guide in relation to Truro BID. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer highlighted that reduced production of the guide was due to reduced funds from Truro BID and reduced income from commercial advertising. This year a summer guide and a winter guide towards Christmas would be produced and a generic spring guide, a half size pamphlet, would be used to advertise the City but without any commercial advertising.

Councillor Mrs Carlyon further requested clarification regarding £58k for Events (Appendix A; 6801). The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the costs related to the Winter Gift Fair where income had been approximately £78k and the costs approximately £58k. Councillor Mrs Carlyon asked where these figures fit with the Quay events and the budget. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that a surplus of £20k had been made from the Winter Gift Fair and placed into the Tourist Information Centre account. The Lemon Quay account reflected costs and income from the City Council's role as the manager of the Quay; as per

agreement with Cornwall Council. When the City Council is the organiser of the event, any surplus income is placed elsewhere in the accounts.

Councillor Mrs Carlyon further requested information regarding funds allocated for the Library and if money had been set aside for taking on library staff. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the City Council continued to negotiate the terms of taking on the staff, but the Council still had the final decision on the detailed proposal.

Councillor Mrs Stokes requested information relating to the new National Health Service (NHS) GP contract as the cost for the appointment of a Social Prescriber would now be included in the fee paid to GPs. Would this effect the amount that Truro City Council pay for the Social Prescriber (Appendix A; 3040)? Councillor Mrs Stokes further requested if this had been considered when the City Council budgeted for their own Community Navigator. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer advised that, because the NHS initiative was very recent, it had not yet been considered but asked members to note that, although the two roles work closely together, they were employed to do separate work. He confirmed that the Community Navigator would attend a future Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting to explain her work. He also highlighted how these differing roles had been confirmed by a Government Minister. There was a difference between health needs and community needs and it was important to consider these with reference to the City Council's commitment to the Community Navigator.

Councillor Mrs Stokes requested information relating to the increase from the initial budget of sale items purchased for the coffee bar in Boscawen park and the lack of variant available (£3k). The Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer highlighted that the coffee bar had experienced difficulties with trading in the past; including the closure of the tennis courts during the refurbishment. The costs had also been initially budgeted based on the previous owners estimates. This year the City Council would be able to budget based on actual costs. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the current manager would be asked to provide a narrative and a plan for reducing the loss of sale material to the budget allowance that would demonstrate to the Finance and General Finance Committee how this expenditure and future pricing could be improved. The Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer reminded members of the Committee that there would be further disruptions to the coffee bar when moved to allow for the pavilion building work to commence. The income from the coffee bar could therefore not be guaranteed until this plan of work had been concluded.

Councillor Biscoe requested further information regarding Truro BID and their commitment in the production of the Truro guide. This was in reflection of the relationship between the City Council and the Truro BID. Members of the Committee suggested that the City Council arrange a meeting with Truro BID's board members to establish the objectives of the relationship and how the two organisations could work together to improve the City and local businesses. Members suggested that the BID's reduced budget was having a noticeable impact on the City and adding pressure to the City Council to pick up extra costs.

Following the Town Clerk agreeing to action a meeting with Truro BID it was proposed by Councillor Mrs Cox, seconded by Councillor Rich and unanimously

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer's report be noted.

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer agreed to set up a meeting with the Board of Truro BID to discuss the points raised.

337 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE (TIC)

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer presented the Tourist Information Centre's (TIC) monthly report highlighting an increase in revenue since moving premises. In December 2018 a 106% increase was recorded in relation to December 2017. He added that opportunities to increase further revenue were possible. However, he asked members to note that the TIC's principle role was to provide information to the public. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer further added that the TIC had been successful in becoming the Cornish Riviera's box office; distributing tickets for all Cathedral events. Members agreed that this was an advantage and a positive gain for the TIC.

The TIC was hoping to develop a monthly evening tour to coincide with their ongoing work with the Heritage Cities. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer expanded on this project and added that the City Council was part of a group of Cities linked for tourists (primarily American) to visit the West of the country; the closest to Truro being Bath. The difficulty, he added, was that this there was no way of knowing how many visitors came to Truro through this project.

Councillor Biscoe highlighted that American tourists come to Truro to also visit the Family History Society (currently in Truro) and suggested that the TIC strengthen their links with this organisation as, should they relocate premises in the future, local businesses would suffer.

Councillor Ms Southcombe commented on the excellence of the stock sourced and displayed in the TIC shop. Councillor Biscoe added that the relocation had proved positive for revenue but highlighted that staff had also benefitted and were positive and excited about their new environment working with enjoyment and enthusiasm. This had created a very welcoming environment.

Councillor Rich requested if online sales in the TIC could be investigated with a view to increasing this. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the possibility of an online shop was being actively reviewed by staff.

Thanks were offered to the TIC staff for their achievements.

The report was noted.

338 DEVOLUTION OF LIBRARY SERVICE

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer updated Councillors about the recent developments regarding the library service. Highlighting these as two separate items; one being the staff and the other the building.

There had recently been an informal consultation meeting between Cornwall Council and the library staff. Staff had been asked to express their wishes of transferring to the City Council in the library or to continue employment with Cornwall Council in the Pydar House building. It seemed unlikely from the outcomes of this meeting that any redundancies would be required.

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer highlighted that he was now waiting for a meeting with senior library management however, it did not seem likely that the transfer would be resolved by March 2019 as previously predicted. Cornwall Council had proposed that the transfer date could be May.

Councillor Wells (Chairman) requested an update to the devolution of the library building and whether this was working simultaneously with the transfer of the library staff. The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer suggested that, in his opinion,

the building schedule had fallen behind following the building surveys report in November. Work had yet to begin to ameliorate the health and safety issue identified following this report. A meeting had been arranged for the 22 February to discuss the devolution of the library building and the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer felt confident that this would put the devolution of the building on track. He had offered to take the £50k for the repair work and undertake the work to get the devolution moving.

Councillor Biscoe suggested £50k was only Cornwall Council's estimate of work and surplus should be requested to ensure that the works would not need to be financed by the City Council. He also added that this situation had been prolonged for a number of years and suggested that the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer be given the opportunity to assess the risks, make provisions for those risks and move on with the devolution of the library building. He further suggested that the prolonged time of the devolution would cause undue stress on staff and that both projects should be kept separate. He quoted the Local Government Association (LGA) resident survey in reflection of the library service. The library service was nationally supported and appreciated by 60% of the population however, only 30% in Cornwall. This he added, caused additional stress to senior management.

Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons highlighted that in August the City Council would not have the possibility to continue renting the current room in Penhaligon House and therefore requested the possibility of employing a member of staff to open the library beyond the present opening hours to facilitate the Committee meetings.

Following a discussion regarding room hire, costs of hiring rooms (including discounts for community groups) and personnel who could open the library building for committee meetings, it was suggested that the Town Clerk speak with staff to facilitate the opening of the library building for Committee meetings.

The verbal report was noted.

339 INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer presented the 2018/2019 interim report highlighting that each year the auditor produced two reports; interim report for the current position and a final one once the final accounts were completed. The auditor also had to certify the Council's annual return. He highlighted previous and current recommendations and some actions still outstanding. The auditor had requested the scheme of delegation, currently outstanding, be written down but the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer confirmed this would be done together with the review of Standing Orders.

In 2016/17 the auditor discussed a partial exception calculation be carried out for VAT however a consultant, a VAT expert used by the City Council when necessary, had written to confirm this was not necessary and the auditor had accepted this as a satisfactory position.

340 AUDIT REPORTS

a) Role of the Committee

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer presented the report highlighting that this document was not summarised and given complete to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to approve due to there no longer being a Sub-Committee to undertake this role.

It was proposed by Councillor Wells (Chairman) and

RECOMMENDED that
the Committee approves the above role, purpose and timetable of
work for the forthcoming year.

b) Risk Strategy

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer highlighted to members of the Committee that the City Council continues to have external advisors who back up the report; health and safety advisors, specific advisers on water management and fire safety and independent experts advising on buildings. He further added that risks are in relation to corporate objectives.

Councillor Wells (Chairman) advised that reference to the Management Sub-Committee would be removed as it no longer existed.

Following assurance by the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer that the report was not dissimilar to previous years and that all objectives had been reviewed and confirmed, it was proposed by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Mrs Cox and

RECOMMENDED that
i) the attached Risk Management Strategy be approved;
ii) that the Risk Management Strategy be reviewed in one years' time.

Councillor Mrs Carlyon requested that her name be recorded as voting against the proposed recommendation.

c) Risk Register

(Appendix B)

Councillor Biscoe requested if the buildings from the devolution had been assessed in relation to the risks linked to them and formalised on the Risk Register. The Carrick sports centre was addressed in relation to the managing committee and the need to assess risks for this. Members of the Committee also highlighted the necessity of risk assessments being added to the register in relation to using the Penhaligon House building, the library building and in reflection of the 39 acres of Coosebean land devolved to the City Council. It was suggested that risks need to be formalised in relation to these additional assets. The Town Clerk guided members to Appendix F and the entry *Loss or damage of assets*. However, Councillor Biscoe suggested adding an item on the September Finance and General Purposes agenda to take up a partial review to update, and expand on, the register in relation to the new assets.

Following discussion about the Risk Register and recent assets it was proposed by Councillor Rich, seconded by Councillor Roden and

RECOMMENDED that
i) the attached Risk Register be approved;
ii) the Risk Register reviewed when considering new services and assets;
iii) that the next general review is carried out at the September 2019 meeting of the Finance and General Purposes committee with any new risks being notified as they become known.

341 POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW

Members of the Committee considered this review and the interaction between this and the Community Governance review. If boundaries change following the Boundary Review then this would also have an impact on the polling boundaries. The Town

Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer and Councillor Wells (Chairman) confirmed they would arrange a meeting of the Boundary Review Working Group soon.

The communication was noted.

342 GREAT WESTERN RAILWAYS REVIEW CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer suggested that should any Councillors intend to make any comment then they should be forwarded to the relevant website. Councillor Biscoe highlighted that the City Council should respond as a Council as the review is defensive and taking only few railways that are failing and the huge amount of investments are being made to the railways. He suggested building on the relationships with the railways and addressing ways that can take pressure off the road network. He added it was essential that the City Council maintain confidence and let the Government know that the City Council is confident with the service provided in Cornwall.

Councillor Rich requested that the link be sent to individual members to encourage a response in their own time.

The Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer agreed to bring received responses to a future Finance and General Purposes committee meeting with a plan of how to respond as a Council.

343 DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY (Appendix C)

Councillor Ms Southcombe presented the proposed letter written in response to Cornwall Council declaring a climate emergency. Ms Southcombe added that other local town Councils had also acknowledged a climate emergency. Cornwall Council had proposed to organise a Citizens assembly in relation to the climate emergency where citizens could debate the item. Councillor Ms Southcombe suggested that the City Council replicate the climate emergency and move with Cornwall Council in the debate.

Councillor Biscoe suggested that the proposed letter be edited and read...*this is surely the moment to re-examine all the underlying assumptions*” as it would leave it open to more people to support the case. In his opinion it would be sufficient for the City Council to support the Council and asked that another paragraph be amended to read...*Recently, I and my fellow Councillors have become aware of a proposal for a Cornwall Citizens Assembly which brings together local people from all walks of life to explore the future of Cornwall.*

A discussion developed relating to individual members of the community having responsibility to support the climate emergency. Members of the Committee agreed that recycling and reinforcing the case to the younger generation would be a way for the City Council to support this case.

After lengthy discussions and amendments to the letter it was proposed by Councillor Roden, seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons and

RECOMMENDED that

- i) the City Council declare a Climate Emergency in line with Cornwall Council;
- ii) form a steering group – could be the environment group as suggested for the TKLNP, to look at the potential for carbon reduction within the Council’s operations and to support the actions of Cornwall Council to aim for carbon neutrality by 2030, in line with Cornwall wide actions;
- iii) complete a carbon audit and action plan;
- iv) that the Mayor send the draft letter, as amended, to the leader of Cornwall Council.

344 CORRESPONDENCE

Letters of thanks was presented from the recent grant allocations.

Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons invited members of the Committee to an event in aid of the Cornwall Air Ambulance charity; Test the Team. This would be the third event of this type and to be held at the Alverton Manor on the 7th May 2019.

The meeting closed at 8:28 pm.

CHAIRMAN