

Minutes of the **MEETING** of **BISHOP AUCKLAND TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Wesley Room at the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2018** at 6.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Fleming (Mayor), and Councillors Allen, Blackburn, Brownson, Chappell, Cullen, Tucker, Wilson, L. Zair and S. Zair

Also Present: David Anderson (Town Clerk)

Public in Attendance: None

TC.82/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Councillor A Zair.

TC.83/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

TC.84/18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

TC.85/18 COUNCIL ACCOMMODATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk regarding the proposed purchase of accommodation for the town council. (For copy see file of Minutes)

Members were reminded that at its meeting held on 1st May 2018, Council agreed to pursue the purchase of premises to be used as the Council's offices to help meet its current and long term requirements and also to project a positive and professional image to the public and partner organisations. In reaching this decision the Council considered responses to the public consultation exercise together with a number of options to fund the purchase. (Minute No TC.202/17 refers).

It was noted that due to commercial sensitivity the identity or exact location of the property could not be revealed at the that time.

Members reviewed the options to fund the projected taking into account the internal auditor's recommendation to increase projected balances in the general reserve following the purchase to maintain a minimum threshold of 25% of precept as recommended by Mazars, the Council's external auditor. Members noted that the available funds for the capital project was £127,099. A loan was to be sought from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) to help fund the capital project. Interest rate at the PWLB was 2.89% fixed for the duration of the loan.

Detailed consideration was given to five options to fund the purchase of the premises, which ranged from 80/20 to 50/50 ratio of loan to earmarked reserves. The range of options shown could be accommodated from within the Council's current budget allocation to rent accommodation which is £9,000 p.a. Each option identified an amount of contingencies to be used for any unforeseen issues. Any unused contingencies would be used to minimise borrowing and to provide earmarked funds for future repairs and maintenance.

Signed:
Town Mayor

Councillor Tucker wished it to be recorded that she could not support the purchase of office premises at the current time due to the uncertainty of the economic climate.

It was proposed by Councillor Blackburn and seconded by Councillor S. Zair that Option 1 of the financial options appraisal be agreed.

On a vote being taken the motion was passed. (9 votes for, 1 vote against).

- RESOLVED:**
1. That option 1 of the financial options appraisal be agreed to fund the project
 2. That an application be made to the Secretary of State for permission to borrow money from the Public Works Loans Board

TC.86/18 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council excluded the press and public for the remaining items on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK (CONTINUED)

TC.87/18 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk (for copy see file of Minutes) with regard to the sequencing of the purchase and building work and the lease of office space following the purchase. The report also summarised details of meeting with the vendor

- RESOLVED:**
1. That the recommendations contained in the report be agreed.
 2. That the tender documentation be agreed and the companies listed in the report be invited to tender.

Signed:
Town Mayor