**HALEWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee held on Thursday 26th November 2020 (6.05pm) via Zoom

**PRESENT**

Cllr K Dalton (Chair)

Cllr B Dunn

Cllr T Lucock

Cllr C Rose

Cllr B Swann

Cllr Y Graves

**Also in attendance:**

G Allen - Town Manager

**14. Apologies**

Cllr S Harvey, Cllr D Samuels and Cllr F Martin

**15. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr B Dunn – item #19.

**16. Previous Minutes**

The minutes to be amended to state that Cllr Y Graves was in attendance at the meeting and Cllr S Harvey had sent apologies.

Agreed. The minutes will be shared at the Town Council meeting of December 10th for the formal approval of Council.

**17. Finance Update (to October 31st)**

Councillors considered the report of the Town Manager which highlighted the financial context of the council to October 31st 2020.

After a sort discussion, Councillors formed a view that more information is required on the current budget position and further work on the new budget monitoring system to assist Councillors with effectively scrutinizing reports.

It was **moved by Cllr. C Rose** and **seconded by Cllr. B Swann**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted and,
2. That the budget discussion be deferred and for Councillors to contact the Town Manager with their questions/comment about the report. This can then be used to produce a new report for consideration.

**18. New Policy – Council Protocol for Remote Meetings**

Councillors considered the report of the Town Manager which proposed the approval of a new protocol for remote meetings. The protocol covered the steps required to set up and operate a remote meeting and the management of the meeting.

A number of Councillors expressed the view that the current Code of Conduct is more than adequate to deal with issues of meeting management. In addition, **Cllr. T Lucock** advised that the protocol should not be approved at this point in the Municipal Year, that it is something that should only be discussed at the Annual Meeting when Standing Orders are reviewed and agreed by Councillors.

**It was moved by Cllr. B Swann** and **seconded by Cllr. T Lucock**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. The recommendation to approve the protocol is not agreed.

**19. Grounds Maintenance Contract**

Councillors considered the report of the Town Manager.

After a brief discussion, Councillors were supportive of the proposal to extend the final year of the Grounds Maintenance contract with Knowsley MBC.

**Cllr. B Swann** advised that he is satisfied with the quality of the work by Knowsley MBC. This view was endorsed by other Councillors in the meeting. The Town Manager further advised that the lead officer for the Grounds Maintenance Contract (Steve Jones), will attend the next Town Council meeting on December 10th to provide an overview of the work and take questions/comments from Councillors.

**It was moved by Cllr. C Rose** and **seconded by Cllr. Y Graves**

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. The final year of the contract is approved.
3. That Steve Jones from Knowsley MBC is invited to deliver a Partnership Presentation on the Grounds Maintenance contract to the Town Council meeting scheduled for 10th December 2020.

**20. Policy Development and Admin Review**

Councillors considered the report of the Town Manager. The report presented an overview of the initial priorities for the HR company (HR Law Easy Answers) who will be supporting the Town Council over the next year.

In supporting the initial priorities and the support from the HR company, Cllr C Rose noted that the cost for the support is noteworthy. She compared the cost a Town Council could face if it was ever required to take a case to a tribunal. She proposed that, if the council is satisfied with the quality of support, consideration is given to extending the arrangement with the company to a 2 or 3-year agreement before it expires next year.

**It was moved by Cllr. C Rose and seconded by Cllr. Y Graves**

**And unanimously RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted and,
2. The Town Manager explores the potential for extending the arrangement with HR Law Easy Answers if the council is satisfied with the quality of work next year.

Meeting closed at 7.16 pm

Signed ………………………. Date…………………….