



DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SERVICES MEETING
HELD ON THE 14TH DECEMBER 2021
AT 7.30 pm AT THE RUFUS CENTRE

Present:

Cllr A Snape (Chairman)
Cllr G Mackey
Cllr A Lutley
Cllr P Earles
Cllr I Blazeby (attended virtually)

Also present:

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk & Chief Executive - attended virtually (TC)
Stephanie Stanley – Corporate Services Manager (CSM)
Helen Glover - Senior Finance Officer (SFO)
Lisa Cousins – Administration and Bookings Officer (ABO)
Sarah Burges – Functions & Events Coordinator - attended virtually (FEC)
Derek Kemp (DCK Accounting Solutions – attended virtually)

Members of the public – 0

1336. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted for Councillors Badham (medical) and Gleave (work commitments).

No apologies were required from Maureen Williams who had recently resigned as a Councillor.

1337. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none.

1338. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked the Officer team and the accountant for their work on the budget. He also thanked Officers and Members for their help with the Older People's Christmas Lunch that day which was well executed, and well received by the community.

1339. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

1340. INVITED SPEAKER

There was no invited speaker.

1341. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

1342. MINUTES

- a. For Members to receive and adopt the Minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 11th November 2021.
- b. The minutes of the Business Services Committee held on 11th November 2021 were adopted.

1343. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Business Services Committee 11th November 2021.

There were no matters arising.

1344. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Business Services Priorities for 2022/23

Members discussed various projects they felt were a priority for 2022/23. Members decided the environmental audit (sustainability) was a key priority along with generating profit for the business. Members agreed the installation of a fully compliant disabled access toilet was a priority to ensure the Rufus Centre was fully accessible to all. Members also felt that completing the building refurbishment project, particularly refurbishing the Lockyer Suite, was important although it was appreciated that this would have a substantial cost implication.

The following items were **recommended** to Council as key priorities to take forward for development as projects into 2022/23: -

1. Environmental Audit of the Rufus Centre – sustainability
2. Development of a Business Plan
3. Install a disabled toilet that is compliant with regulations
4. Investigate options and viability for an online booking system

b. Proposed Budget 2022-23

The Accountant introduced the proposed budget by explaining the following:

- 2021 was a base year that had been affected by Covid
- 2021-22 was a recovery year
- The proposed budget for 2022-23 was intended to reinstate pre-pandemic service levels.
- Unavoidable increases for pay scale rates were yet to be decided as part of a National decision, and therefore an assumed 3% increase had been incorporated for this in the budget. The accountant explained what the Unions had been offered (1.75% increase) but this was rejected. The negotiations were with Principle Authorities and the Unions and town/parish Councils were not included in this. The Chancellor had announced that the pay freeze had ceased however no additional guidance had been given.
- Other unavoidable increases relating to salaries was a 1.25% increase in national insurance contributions for social care allowance. The Chancellor announced that

Local Authorities were protected from this however he specifically excluded town and parish councils with this.

- In summary 4.5% needed to be added to basic salary costs.
- Salary splits for 2021-22 budget included Business (then split further between Rendezvous and Rufus), Community and Corporate budgets. This was used again for the proposed 2022-23 budget but the splits had been re-worked with a more accurate allocation per staff member per Committee budget. Due to this, a direct comparison on costs was not sensible.

The following resolution was **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Following discussion of this item, the meeting went back into public open section.

c. Kitchen Equipment

Councillor Mackey suggested that as the Council were recently awarded a 5 * Health and Hygiene rating, the purchase of 2 upright freezers was not essential, considering the current kitchen equipment budget overspend.

It was **resolved** not to purchase the upright freezers at this time in light of budget constraints but to revisit this proposal until the purchase is imperative for food safety.

1345. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Marketing & Communications Plan 2021-22

Members noted the status of actions for the Marketing & Communications Plan. The CSM informed members that an approved contractor list was in place, although not reflected in the plan, which would be updated for next time. A copy of the list would be circulated as part of the meeting papers at the next meeting.

Councillor Blazeby mentioned the action regarding the online booking system and offered to help the Comms Team on this. It was also suggested for this to be a Rufus Steering Group focus point.

b. Marketing & Communications Forward Plan

Members noted the Marketing & Communications Forward Plan circulated.

c. Friday Nights @ Rendezvous

The Chairman congratulated staff on trying different formats, to establish which were more popular events. Members were disappointed that there were no events planned for the summer. The FEC explained that previous ticket sales during the summer were low, resulting in events being cancelled. This was potentially due to other events being held in the community and summer holidays.

The FEC informed members there had been popular events, such as the Pizza and Prosecco night and fish and chip night, although these involved more staff effort, higher costs and a lower return.

Members felt that due to the current uncertainties with potentially increasing restrictions, and the public health concerns, not wanting to expose the team to unnecessary risks, this

was not the right time to be trying new events and they should be curtailed for a while with an option to re-visit in May.

It was **resolved** to progress with the Friday Nights @ Rendezvous Quiz Night in January subject to Public Health advice. Customers at this event would be surveyed on future Friday Night themes. Following this event, the Friday Night events would cease until the situation is reviewed at the May 2022 Business Services meeting.

1346. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

1347. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

12a) Officers Update – noted

12b) Financial Reports – noted

12c) Occupancy Stats and Forecasts – noted

12d) Warrenfield Room – for consideration

12e) Wedding Packages and Pricing 2022/23 – for consideration

12f) Energy Contracts Review – for consideration

12g) Job Description – for consideration

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