

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEEING OF THE COUNCIL
THURSDAY 28th February 2019

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor and Councillors Butler, Edwards, Hey, Kenyon, Michael, Rone, Stevens, Tawn, Tillett and Wilcox

In attendance: Steve Kerry Town Clerk

The Mayor invited her Chaplain to say prayers before the start of the meeting.

C2018/19.95 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillors Chappell, Dykes and Lloyd-Hayes

C2018/19.96 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made at the start of the meeting.

C2018/19.97 ADJUSTMENT TO PRECEPT

The Clerk introduced the report and explained that the error by the accountants would result an increase of 2.31% in the tax levels applied to homes in the city if Council did not act to correct it. The position of the Council's reserves meant it was possible to make a larger draw on the reserves than previously intended, as set out in the report, of around £20,000. This would still leave reserves well above the minimum levels recommended for an organisation of this size. The alternative would be to pass the results of the error on to tax payers when it was possible to avoid that.

Several Councillors expressed their frustration that his was necessary and asked that a full investigation or review take place as to how this had arisen. Some consideration was given to the role of the Council's internal auditor. The Clerk reminded members that the title should not mislead them, the internal auditor is an external inspector of our accountants, professionally qualified and entirely independent of any officer or member. He reviews the internal processes of the Council, and this was exactly the area he would look into. The Clerk would in any case, as soon as this matter is resolved by members brief the internal auditor and ask for his specific observations when he does the next audit.

The Chair of Finance and Policy Committee confirmed that he had personally met the internal auditor and was confident of his independence and professionalism and would welcome his observations for consideration in due course by the Finance Committee.

Members raised the issue of a formal apology and some compensation for the trouble the Council has been put to, and the risk to our reputation if the mistake had not been picked up at Herefordshire Council before the tax demands were sent out. The Clerk will pass this proposal to DCK in time for their response to be considered by Finance and Policy Committee at its next meeting on 16th April.

After discussion it was proposed by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Tawn and

RESOLVED

That Council agrees to a revised budget showing a draw on the reserves of £20,013, a revised precept of £867,829, and a zero % tax increase.

That the Clerk writes to the Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council expressing the Council's appreciation for the assistance given by his officers in resolving this matter.

That at its next meeting the Finance and Policy Committee review this matter in the context of the performance of DCK since summer 2016.

After this matter had been resolved, the Mayor read an email from Councillor Lloyd-Hayes who had sent her apologies for the meeting. There was some discussion of the contents and Councillor Edwards queried whether it was in order to continue to discuss a matter after a resolution had been made. The Clerk advised the Mayor on procedure and the Mayor ruled that the resolution of the agenda item had indeed concluded the business of Council, that the points raised subsequently could all be considered at Finance and Policy Committee and that the business of this meeting was now closed.

The Mayor declared that there being no other business the meeting had closed at 6:20 pm.

Signed

Date