

Finance Advisory Group (FAG)

Notes

Meeting Tuesday 26th January 2021 7.30pm – 9.00pm (Zoom)

Invitees – all AG & Committee Chairmen

Chairman: Cllr Ashwell

Attendees: Cllrs Underwood, Howell-Jones, Millard, Hassall, Jones, Studd plus Parish Clerk

Notetaker: Cllr Ashwell

1. Draft BPC Investment Strategy

- 1.1. The group discussed in detail Cllr Jones' proposal for investment in environmentally-friendly stock & shares, based on his documents circulated to FAG in advance of the meeting.
- 1.2. FAG also discussed the impact on the BPC strategic approach to investment, and our Strategy document in the light of the existing Principles for Investment of BPC Cash Assets (approved by Council May2020) and national guidance: Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments (Full document) and Local Government Investments (briefing)
- 1.3. Councillors were also advised about guidance on Parish Council investments in 'The Good Councillors' Guide'; LGA Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioner's Guide (March 2020 edition) (JPAG).
- 1.4. Other issues taken into account included potential reputational and financial risks, absence of expertise within BPC, the need for liquidity as well as security and the timescales when expenditure may need to be made on CIL and CAP projects.
- 1.5. The FAG members reviewed the full Strategy. It was adopted with particular focus on the following points:
 - 1.5.1. Section 4 Non-specified Investments. It was agreed after a vote (6 for and one abstention) to recommend to full Council that BPC would not in such investments, including the money market, stocks and shares.
 - 1.5.2. Section 8 Reporting on Investment Performance. Under 8.1 that Investment performance will be circulated once a quarter to the full Council. It is proposed that the first such circulation takes place after the March 2021 accounts have been reconciled.
- 1.6. Cllr Hassall suggested we may look at other options to support biodiversity and these will be explored through the appropriate Advisory before any proposal(s) are brought back to Council.
- 1.7. **POST MEETING NOTE:** The Clerk contacted CAPALC and the response from their Finance Adviser is consistent with the recommendation made by FAG. The full comment from CAPALC has been shared with FAG members.
 - 1.7.1. CAPALC's County Executive Officer referred in her response to an organisation (CCLA) which supports Parish Councils and voluntary organisations with professional advice and active management of investments of funds.
 - 1.7.1.1. This will be followed up over the coming months.
 - 1.7.1.2. It is noted that investment plans will first require clear timescales relating to Precept spending profile, CIL and CAP expected delivery dates.

2. Donation of funds

- 2.1. FAG members were advised that the Chairman of the Protect Buckden's Future Group had made a generous offer to donate the balance of their donated funds to BPC (£2,281.73)
- 2.2. The offer has been accepted on the basis that: *The [PBFG] Committee has now decided to offer all these funds to the Buckden Parish Council on the understanding that this money will be used to oppose inappropriate development in and around the village, as seen fit by the Buckden Parish Council.*
- 2.3. To comply with BPC Financial Standing Orders this donation will be managed as an "Earmarked Reserve" for management through the BPC Large-Scale Planning Committee.