

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE held on-line (Zoom) on Tuesday 22nd September 2020 at 7.30pm

Present - Cllr C Collier (Chair of Committee), Cllr L Duhigg (Vice-Chair of Committee), Cllr C Cheta, Cllr A Milliner, Cllr A Goble, Cllr S Griffiths, Cllr D Seabrook, Cllr I Sharkey, Cllr C Gallagher, Town Clerk T Allen, Finance Officer Z Malone.

PF515 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PF516 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the public were present.

PF517 TO CONSIDER APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS

All members were present.

PF518 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Cllr Duhigg as a LDC CIL Board member.

PF519 TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF 21st JULY 2020

It was resolved to adopt the minutes as a true record.

PF520 TO REVIEW THE 2020/21 FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL YEAR TO-DATE: -

1. Finance Officer's report

Received.

2. Bank account summary

Received.

3. Bank Reconciliation statements (for signing)

Received and resolved to sign.

4. Income & Expenditure report

The Chairman led a detailed review of all budget headings, including income and expenditure performance at Month 5 of the financial year.

Loss of income to-date was discussed in detail and the Sales Ledger outstanding receipts were noted. The Finance Officer stated that the second precept payment had been received from LDC and that the budgetary position was on-track with the expected position at this point in the financial year.

It was noted that there were a number of budget headings that are expected to be underspent at the end of the financial year, including salaries and marketing.

The Chairman stated that a reprofiling of the budget at Month 5 showed an estimated income/expenditure income loss gap of £42K due to reduced hiring of the Council's facilities.

The Chairman reported that indirect expenditure had reduced, sales ledger had improved to nearly pre-Covid levels and that the overall budgetary position showed a slight improvement.

It was noted that windfall (one-off) income payments should be allocated to a budget heading, to revert to general reserves at the end of the financial year.

5. Balance Sheet

Received.

6. CIL report

Received.

7. List of payments (for approval)

It was resolved to approve the July & August 2020 payments amounting to £121,098.04 as scheduled in the meeting papers.

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PF521 TO REVIEW THE INTERNAL AUDIT ACTION PLAN

The Clerk's report was noted.

PF522 TO NOTE THE 20019/20 EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

It was noted that the External Auditor had found no issues with the Council's accounts.

PF523 TO NOTE AND DISCUSS AN HISTORICAL ANOMALY IN THE CIL ACCOUNTING

The Finance Officer's report was noted and discussed.

It was resolved that the CIL budget account should be credited from the general reserves account to redress the CIL anomaly identified.

PF524 TO NOTE THE FINANCIAL EFFECT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANNUAL PAY SCALE INCREASES AND APPROVED INCREMENTS

The Finance Officer's report was noted and discussed.

It was noted that provision for these increases had been factored into the current budget.

The Clerk reported that the new pay scales and previously agreed increments will be implemented in the October 2020 salaries, backdated to April 2020.

PF525 TO NOTE THE USE OF THE RBS BUDGETING FACILITY FOR DEVELOPING THE 2021/22 BUDGET

It was agreed that this facility and reporting format would be a very useful tool in creating the 2021/22 draft budget.

The Clerk noted that all Committees, Councillors and Officers are now being asked to estimate their 2020/21 outturn and 2021/22 budgetary requirements.

The Chairman will work with the Finance Officer to produce a Q2 outturn report for the Committee's next meeting.

PF526 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE CIL WORKING PARTY AND TO AGREE ACTIONS

Cllr Gallagher's report was received and actions noted.

PF527 PTC WEB SITE ACCESSIBILITY - TO AUTHORISE THE PURCHASE OF THE BROWSEALLOUD PLUG-IN

The Marketing Assistant's report was noted and discussed.

Cllr Seabrook and the Clerk related the background to this item.

It was noted that the BrowseAloud 'plug-in' was a cost-effective complete solution to allow the Council to fully comply with the imminent introduction of Government legislation regarding web sites accessibility.

It was resolved to purchase a one-year licence at a cost of £900.00.

PF528 ANNUAL REVIEW OF ASSET REGISTER

The Clerk noted that this review was underway and that all Committees, Councillors and Officers will be asked to inspect the Register for accuracy.

PF529 TO REVIEW THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS-OF-REFERENCE

The Clerk's draft updated T-O-R's were discussed with some changes made. It was resolved to adopt the updated T-O-R's for the Committee, as amended; [these are appended to these minutes].

PF530 TO DISCUSS THE LDC REQUEST FOR PAYMENT OF PRVIOUS ELECTIONS FEES

In view of the late presentation of these invoices by LDC, the high amounts involved and the need for further detailed information, it was resolved to make a complaint to LDC and challenge the request for the immediate payment of these invoices.

PF531 TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT NEEDS RELATING TO WORKING FROM HOME

The Clerk's report was noted and discussed.

The Clerk related the background to this item and the need for additional equipment to meet the staff's needs for working from home and to meet the Council's obligations in this respect.

It was resolved that the laptop for the Senior Projects Officer should be acquired straight away at a cost in the region of £600.00.

Clerk to provide a fully costed schedule of remaining requirements for the Committee's next meeting.

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NOTE: In accordance with Standing Order No. 3(d) and the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1, in view of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted, the public and press were excluded from the rest of the meeting.

PF532 AGED DEBT ANALYSIS

The Finance Officer's report was noted and discussed.
The Chairman noted a slightly improving situation.

PF533 TO DISCUSS THE CURRENT PAYMENT OF UTILITY COSTS BY PTC FOR LEASED FACILITIES

The Finance Officer's report was noted and discussed.
It was noted that the metering of electricity in some of the Council's premises needs to be fully investigated so that correct charges can be accurately passed on to the hirers concerned.
Finance Officer and Parks Officer to investigate and report to the next meeting of the Committee.

PF534 TO APPROVE HALF-YEARLY WRITE-OFFS

The Finance Officer's report was noted and discussed.
It was noted that this was not debt and the proposed adjustment for void invoices on the ledger would credit the Council's finances.
It was resolved to make this adjustment in the amount of £724.14.

PF535 TO REVIEW LESSEES/HIRERS STATEMENT OF CREDITS/DEBITS

The Finance Officer's report was noted and discussed.
The Chairman noted that the overall amounts in question remained at around the same level as the previous month

PF536 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 21st October 2020 at 7.30pm.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21:27.

APPENDIX

**POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Meets a minimum of 5 times a year.

The Officers responsible for reporting to this committee are the Clerk and Finance Officer.

Responsible for ensuring the sound management of the Council's finances including the awarding of grants and Members Allowances where appropriate and its corporate facilities.

Terms of Reference

1. Make recommendations on any financial matters to be dealt with by Full Council (as outlined in the general terms of reference)
2. Be responsible for the review and adoption of appropriate policies to support the day-to-day administration of the council
3. Be responsible for matters not specifically delegated to any other standing committee
4. Be responsible for ensuring risk assessments are undertaken as appropriate
5. Be responsible for ensuring the council has adequate insurance
6. Be responsible for the Council's Asset register.
7. Be responsible for the Council's insurance requirements.
8. Act as lead committee in respect of any partnership initiative of a corporate nature with the principal Local Authorities for the area including the development of Joint Partnership Committees and constitutional matters.
9. Prepare annual Committee budget estimates in October on all Terms of Reference referred to above and forward to the Policy & Finance Committee not later than December
10. Manage and Monitor at least on a quarterly basis the expenditure incurred and committed against the approved budget estimates for the Committee and monitor all other Standing Committees
11. Prepare annual committee budget estimates, and review alongside other standing committee budget estimates to formulate a recommended budget and precept requirement for approval by Full Council
12. Manage and monitor (at least on a quarterly basis) the income and expenditure against the approved budget for the committee and council as a whole
13. To consider and make decisions on grant applications. At least one of its meetings each year will be devoted to the consideration of grant applications funded out of the Grants budget; applications for funding from this budget may, however, be considered at other times of the year too.
14. To support, monitor and implement the parts of the Business Plan relevant to the committee and make recommendations to Council for revisions if/as required
15. To oversee all legal matters pertaining to leases, mortgage, insurance claims, insurance cover, damage to property, vehicle insurance and debt recovery