

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 8TH JANUARY 2024 AT THE CIVIC HALL,
POYNTON

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr P Oakes

Cllrs: M Beanland, L Clarke, M Sewart. T Swatridge,

Officers in attendance: Haf Barlow (Town Clerk)

52. To note if anyone attending or present at the Committee meeting declares that they are making, or intend to make, an audio recording and/or film the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that the meeting is recorded for the purpose of minute taking and the recording is deleted when draft minutes are agreed.

There were no other declarations of a recording at the meeting.

53. Questions from members of the public

A resident was present and requested a copy of the budget. The Clerk will email a copy to the resident.

54. Apologies for absence

Cllrs D Belcher and S Lees

55. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

56. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4th December 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the 4th December 2023 are an accurate record and are approved (4 for, 1 abstention)

57. To receive a report from the Clerk on the Server and to agree the recommendations

The Clerk gave an overview of the report. At the meeting in October, the Clerk was asked to speak to Cllr Simon Lees, who has expertise in IT regarding the proposals.

The Clerk read out an email from Cllr Lees who was unable to attend this meeting.

Cllr Lees' recommendation that the Town Council should move to a cloud hosted service as soon as possible was noted. The quotation included one off costs to implement the move and the ongoing costs of the software. Two alternative options to migrate the accounting software and ongoing software costs were set out in the report. Microshade were the cheapest and would provide the council with the same software that is currently being used. ITG will undertake all the necessary changes to enable the move to a cloud-based solution.

The one-off cost of £4,250.00 would need to be funded from the Rolling Capital Reserve. The costs for the additional software required have been included in the budget for the next financial year. It was noted that the quote was dated August 2023 and that it was valid for 30 days, the Chair requested that the validity of the quote is checked.

Members discussed when the move to cloud based should take place and the disposal of the old server.

RESOLVED: That the report from the Clerk on the server is received. That the Town Council adopt Microshade as its preferred supplier as the platform for the accountancy software. That the one off costs to move to a cloud based platform are funded from rolling capital. That the move to the new platform should take place early in the next financial year. That the Clerk will investigate whether the quote included the disposal of the server and ensure that the quotes were still valid. (NC)

58. To receive the income and expenditure Q3 month 8 report

The Clerk invited questions from the members. The Clerk advised that she had carried out a detailed review of where the Town Council is in relation to the overall budget with a projected forecast for the end of the financial year. At present the Clerk advised that there would be a deficit of around £5,000.00, largely due to the significant increase in business rates that were implemented after the budget was set. There have also been increased costs to the streetlight maintenance and energy charges. This deficit did not take into account the receipt of CIL money £46,484, which must be earmarked for specific infrastructure projects and would distort the figures. Taking into account the CIL money there would be projected surplus at the end of the year.

The Clerk confirmed that the Town Council have sufficient general reserves to cover that deficit. It is hoped that further savings will be achieved in the final quarter and the deficit reduced.

The Clerk responded to questions in relation to utility costs, sundry expenses, general expenses and lettings income target.

RESOLVED: That the Income and Expenditure Q3 month 8 report is received (NC)

59. To receive and consider the summary budget and the report from the Clerk on the Town Councils budget and reserves for 2023-2024 and to agree recommendations to full Town Council.

The Clerk gave an overview of the summary budget and the separate report highlighting the business case to increase the role of the Marketing and Events Coordinator from 3 to 4 days a week.

Three options in relation to Cheshire East Council requests for funding have been provided in the documents to the committee. The funding requests currently related to mitigating parking charges, and contributions towards the Leisure Centre.

Members considered and discussed this funding request from Cheshire East and potential future requests.

Members discussed the options within the summary budget.

RESOLVED: That the hours of the Marketing Events Coordinator are increased from the 1st April 2024 from 3 to 4 days (NC)

RESOLVED: That the budget with no additional funding for Cheshire East Council requests for funding would be recommended to full council. The precept request recommended to the Town Council would be £595,504.00 (4 for, 1 against)

60. To receive and consider the report from the Investment Working Group and the draft Investment Policy and to agree recommendation on investments to the Town Council.

Members considered the report from the Investment Working Group and the Investment Policy. The CCLA fund was a Public Sector Deposit fund, which is a sterling fund, investing in other banks. The yield as of the 3rd January was 5.21%. The fund is triple A rated with a stable rating as of July 2023.

Members discussed the matter of risk profile and the amounts invested.

RESOLVED: That it is recommended to the Town Council that from the deposits held in the Cambridge and Nationwide building societies are split and a third is invested into Cambridge, Nationwide and a new account is opened with the CCLA and a third is invested into the Public Sector Deposit Fund (NC)

61. To receive and consider the payment lists from October and November 2023

RESOLVED: That the payment schedule 1st October to 31st October totaling £48,610.21. That the payment schedule 1st November to 30th November totaling £62,399.99 are received (NC)

62. To note the bank reconciliation for October and November 2023 as verified by the Chairman

RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliation for October and November 2023 as verified by the Chairman is noted. (NC)

63. Communication messages

There were no communication messages

Meeting end time: 8pm

Signed.....

Dated.....