

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held in the Council Chamber on Thursday 23rd June 2022 at 6pm.

PRESENT: Richard Stubbings
Barry Darch (Chair)
Jack Walmsley

IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Cunningham (Town Clerk)
Gillian Birrell (virtually via Zoom)
Daniel Smith (virtually via Zoom)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 0

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Lever, Robinson, Catchpole, Chidley, Smith and Birrell.

2. To receive Declarations of Interest or any requests for the granting of dispensations in relation to any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda

There were none.

3. To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2022

RESOLVED To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2022.

4. To elect a Deputy Chair of the Committee

Chair proposed that Cllr Stubbings be elected as Deputy Chair of the Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Walmsley, a vote was taken which was unanimously in favour, and it was therefore

RESOLVED To elect Cllr Stubbings as Deputy Chair of the Committee for 2022-23.

5. To consider recommending changes to Standing Order 4.2 to allow this Committee to vire money from unallocated reserves to specific projects, including the creation of a budget for the creation of a Strategic Plan for the Council

Cllr Stubbings commented that all Council spend should be budgeted for, and that budgets should be assigned to committees, working parties or officers to manage. He noted that unallocated reserves are for unplanned expenditure, and that when this

occurs, a budget should be allocated to the project, including mid-year. He suggested that there was a need to review the Council's Financial Regulations so that the requirement for budgets and a clear responsibility for these was included. He further suggested that the Regulations should show a revised spend authority for expenditure that is routine and that for emergency situations. He proposed that the Regulations be reviewed accordingly, and he agreed to work with the Town Clerk to produce a draft for discussion by the Finance and Governance Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Walmsley, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED That Cllr Stubbings and Town Clerk work on revisions to the Financial Regulations to ensure that budgets are allocated to projects, that responsibility is assigned for all budget headings and that a revised procedure for authorising spend is agreed.

Cllr Stubbings suggested a revision to the proposed change to Regulation 4.2, to replace the words "from unallocated reserves" to "from reserves (including CIL) or from a grant", and he proposed that the change be recommended to full Council, subject to this amendment. This was seconded by Cllr Walmsley, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To revise Financial Regulation 4.2 to add the words "The Finance & Governance Committee shall have the power to create budget headings to allow specific projects to be allocated a budget mid-year from reserves (including CIL) or from a grant, provided that such budgets do not exceed £5,000, in which case authority will be needed from Full Council."

6. To consider a proposed approach to projects that arise mid-year

Councillors noted that this had been included in the discussion at Item 5 above.

7. To consider Council's Internal Controls

i To consider a draft Internal Controls Policy

Chair proposed that the draft policy be recommended for approval, subject to one amendment to paragraph 3.4 to remove the words "rather than reasonable". This was seconded by Cllr Stubbings, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the draft Internal Controls Policy, subject to the amendment above.

ii To consider a draft Internal Controls Procedure

Chair proposed that the draft Internal Controls Procedure be agreed, subject to the following amendments:

Asset Register and Regular maintenance arrangements to be responsibility of Assets & Estates Committee;

Annual review of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders to be responsibility of

Finance & Governance Committee;

Scrutiny of income records to be responsibility of Clerk monthly, nominated Councillor quarterly;

Bank reconciliations to be signed off by nominated Councillor monthly;

PAYE/NIC/Pension operations to be checked by Chair of Finance and Chair of Personnel quarterly;

Nominated Councillor in document to be Chair of Finance & Governance Committee.

This was seconded by Cllr Walmsley, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RESOLVED To approve the amended Internal Controls Procedure.

8. To consider policies as below:

i draft Reserves Policy

Chair proposed that the draft policy be recommended to full council for approval. This was seconded by Cllr Stubbings, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the draft Reserves Policy.

ii revised Whistleblowing Policy

Cllr Walmsley proposed that the draft policy be recommended to full council for approval, subject to the inclusion of the Monitoring Officer's details in the contact details section. This was seconded by Cllr Stubbings, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the draft Whistleblowing Policy, subject to the amendment above.

iii revised Complaints Procedure

Cllr Stubbings proposed that the draft policy be recommended to full council for approval. This was seconded by Cllr Walmsley, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the draft Complaints Procedure.

9. Date of next meeting

This was agreed as Thursday 21st July at 6pm.

Meeting closed at 6.35pm.