

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held in the Committee Room at Town Hall on Monday 27th January 2025 at 5.45pm.

PRESENT: Richard Stubbings
Barry Darch
Christine Wheeler (Chair)
Joe Athorn
Chris Greenhill
Colin Hill
Peter Shannon

IN ATTENDANCE: Paul Cunningham (Town Clerk)
Steven Elvin (RFO)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 0

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Birrell and Chidley.

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 Governance Committee meeting held on Monday 25th November 2024

RESOLVED To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on Monday 25th November 2024.

4. To consider spend against budget for April to December 2024

RFO noted that the figures show expenditure within £1,000 of the budgeted figure and income £29,000 over budget. RFO explained that this includes c£14000 of CIL income, which is never budgeted, as well as grants to offset increased expenditure on website, Volunteer Information Day and refurbishment to town centre finger posts.

5. To review the Committee Structure Review from 2022 and to consider any implications for potential changes to current committee structure and/or committee responsibilities

Councillors considered the report and how the effect of the changes that the report had

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recommended.

Cllr Stubbings commented that Assets & Estates Committee is not busy now, compared to the old Assets & Environment Committee, and that the current committee has capacity to take on additional responsibilities. Cllr Stubbings also suggested that Finance & Governance Committee should make recommendations concerning charges at Quay, having consulted DCSP Committee, rather than this being done by DCSP Committee. He also suggested that the charges should be reviewed as part of the budget setting process.

Cllr Darch proposed that the following changes be recommended to full council for approval: that all aspects of Blyburgate Hall should be managed by Assets & Estates Committee; that responsibility for Emergency Planning should be moved to Planning & Highways Committee; that responsibility for the council's Asset Register should reside with Finance & Governance Committee; that responsibility for monitoring the council's Strategic Plan should transfer to Finance & Governance Committee from DCSP, once the current review of the Strategic Plan by DCSP is completed; that DCSP Committee is renamed as Development and Commerce Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Greenhill, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve the following changes to committee responsibilities: that all aspects of Blyburgate Hall should be managed by Assets & Estates Committee; that responsibility for Emergency Planning should be moved to Planning & Highways Committee; that responsibility for the council's Asset Register should reside with Finance & Governance Committee; that responsibility for monitoring the council's Strategic Plan should transfer to Finance & Governance Committee from DCSP, once the current review of the Strategic Plan by DCSP is completed; that DCSP Committee is renamed as Development and Commerce Committee.

Councillors also discussed the workload implications and they asked Town Clerk to submit a quarterly report on progress with projects, including workload implications, to the committee.

Cllr Stubbings expressed concern about the number of working parties currently in operation and he suggested that these needed to be reviewed.

Cllr Stubbings suggested that councillors' monitoring of payments would be improved by moving the 'Receipts & Payments' item nearer the beginning of full council agendas and this was agreed.

6. To review the suspension of delegation to committees and to consider making a recommendation to full council

Cllr Stubbings suggested that any review needed to define and codify what could be delegated and what should be referred to full council for decision. Cllr Darch noted that the original proposal had been to set up a Working Party to review delegation and he proposed that full council be recommended to set up such a Working Party, with the membership to consist of the chairs of each committee (or Deputy if the Chair was unavailable). This was seconded by Cllr Stubbings, a vote was taken which was in

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favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To set up a Working Party to review delegation, with the membership to consist of the chairs of each committee (or Deputy if the Chair was unavailable).

7. To consider grant applications as follows:

i Catch 22

Councillor Stubbings proposed that the request for a grant of £1,000 be recommended to full council for approval, subject to council requesting a report on the activity, including the number of young people taking part. This was seconded by Cllr Greenhill, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve a grant of £1,000, subject to council requesting a report on the activity, including the number of young people taking part.

ii Beccles Tennis Club

Councillor Greenhill proposed that full council be recommended to authorise a grant of £1,000 towards the cost of replacing the tennis club's lighting with LED lights. This was seconded by Cllr Stubbings, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To approve a grant of £1,000.

iii Lowestoft & District Independent Archive (LADIA)

Cllr Darch expressed concern that LADIA do not have any professional staff to manage any records appropriately. He also noted that all Beccles records are either held at The Hold in Ipswich or at Beccles Museum and he therefore suggested that LADIA currently do not offer sufficient benefit to the people of Beccles to justify a grant.

Cllr Greenhill proposed that no grant be made, due to the lack of benefit to the people of Beccles. This was seconded by Cllr Hill, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To not make a grant award to LADIA.

8. To consider an annual grant of £500 to Beccles Food Festival

Councillors agreed to defer a decision on a grant award, pending receipt of the festival's accounts for 2024.

9. To consider allocating £5,000 of council's CIL funds for planning consultancy advice regarding the former waste site

Councillors considered the report from Town Clerk. Town Clerk confirmed that the plan was to work with a single planning consultant, who would commission such professional reports as may be needed. Town Clerk suggested that the brief should include an initial feasibility assessment to clarify if the project has any chance of success.

Cllr Stubbings proposed that the committee recommend to full council to allocate up to £5,000 from CIL funds, with the project to be monitored by Planning & Highways

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Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Greenhill, a vote was taken which was in favour and it was therefore

RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL To allocate up to £5,000 from CIL funds, with the project to be monitored by Planning & Highways Committee.

10. To consider a response to the government's Standards & Conduct Framework consultation

Councillors agreed that Town Clerk and Cllr Darch be asked to draft a response. Cllr Darch agreed to canvas councillors for their views.

11. To agree the date of next meeting

Councillors agreed that the next meeting should be held on Monday 24th February 2025 at 5.45pm.

Meeting closed at 7.33pm.

ACTION POINTS

Agenda Item	What?	By Whom?	By When?
5	Move 'Receipts and Payments' higher up full council agenda	Town Clerk	For February full council
8	Ask Food Festival for 2024 accounts	Town Clerk	Before next meeting of committee
10	Draft response to Standards & Conduct Framework consultation	Town Clerk and Cllr Darch	Before full council on 4 th February

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Finance & Governance Committee Chair