**NORTHAMPTON TOWN COUNCIL**

**ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting held on 12th April 2022 at 11:00 am in the Committee Room of the Town Council’s offices at the Guildhall Northampton.**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Marriott (Chair), Birch, Hibbert and Purser

**Officers in Attendance:** S Carter (Town Clerk), C Maclellan (Finance Officer) and F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

1. **Apologies**

No apologies were submitted for this meeting, all were present.

1. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr J Birch declared a non-peculiarly interest in relation to the Expenses incurred and submitted for approval, in addition to being a non-financial board member of the Friends of Delapre board.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED**: The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes from the previous Accounts Sub-Committee Meeting held on 8th March2022.

1. **Revenue Budget 2021/22**

The revenue budget for the month ended March 2022 was tabled and is attached at Appendix A.

It was noted that the commitment for the Mayor’s annual allowance for transport costs had reduced with funds unspent compared to the previous the previous Mayors’ under Northampton Borough Council. The Finance Officer explained the unspent funds would be reallocated into the general reserves.

Regarding the Mayoral Allowance, it was highlighted by Councillors that during the time of the former Northampton Borough Council each Mayor managed the fund differently. The Clerk confirmed the recently recommended amendments to the Mayoral Allowance, now called Civic Office Budget and associated processes which would be more systemized. It was raised by Councillors whether the Deputy Mayor is provided with a designated fund however, the Clerk clarified that Northampton Town Council are currently unable to provide the Deputy Mayor with a designated fund, yet a proportion of the Civic Office Budget has been assigned to the Deputy Mayor for expenses. It was confirmed by the Town Clerk and Finance Officer a review will take place in order to create the principles for a Deputy Mayor allowance.

Councillors requested for the Town Clerk to compile a report on Northampton Town Councils Mayor’s income, expenses and available funds compared to other Town Council’s with Mayors.

The Finance Officer highlighted the Councillor’s Community Fund (CCF) expenditure had increased by 41% as Northampton Town Council received and approved a large amount of applications in the previous month. It was confirmed any unspent funds from CCF would be earmarked against that councillor in the Financial Year 2022-2023 though this would not happen in future years. The Finance Officer highlighted that eight Councillors had not claimed their allowance which had been reallocated to the Councillor Grants Scheme. Councillors proposed allowances used in this way should be presented separately in the budget heading.

**NOTED**

1. **Payment of Accounts**The Finance Officer explained payroll is prepared in advance to enable the Accounts Sub-Committee to authorize it however, they were required to re-submit the payroll due to a backdated 2.5% pay uplift for employed Officers, ultimately Northampton Town Council incurred a fee for the resubmission.

The Finance Officer explained the Mayor was paid in advance of authorization for expenses, and any charitable funds from the Mayor’s Gala do not include funds raised via the raffle. A concern was raised by Councillors how the Mayor has received cash donations for their Charity which they then deposited and issued to the Charity themselves. Councillors proposed and agreed a second bank account be created for charitable proceeds to ensure transparency and security, in which the funds will be paid to the Mayor’s chosen charity at the end of their tenure. It was proposed by Councillors a process of checks and balances be created for charitable donations received via the Mayor as it is the only part to Northampton Town Council that holds cash, then this report can be presented to Councillors every 6 months.

Councillors asked whether Northampton Town Council received any discount on services procured from West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) however, the Town Clerk informed Northampton Town Council had submitted a formal request to WNC’s facilities manager yet, no response has been received. The Finance Officer further explained they had discussed about discounted rates with WNCs and they were unable to apply it. It was posed by Councillors that WNC’s Head of Liaison for Town and Parish Councils is consulted further on a discounted rate for services procured via WNC.

It was raised by the Finance Officer that the former Interim Town Clerks consultant services will no longer be procured or required, and the fund allocated for this will be reallocated to the professional services budget.

The Town Clerk highlighted that Northampton Town Council utilise a Solicitor who is a specialist in Town and Parish Councils to the extent he has written books on the matter.

Councillors asked whether any changes will be made to the Mayor’s car service with an additional part time driver. The Town Clerk advised the driver is awaiting to hear in writing whether a potential candidate would be interested in a part time driver role that could include additional responsibilities such as administrative work.

Councillors agreed to pay a £125 fee for the posting the Democratic Services Officer vacancy for two weeks in a local recruitment paper.

**RESOLVED:** That the payments as attached at appendix B be authorised and paid.

1. **Internal Controls**

The Finance Officer provided a verbal update regarding the recent internal controls check conducted by Cllr Holland-Delamere. The Finance Officer explained Cllr Holland-Delamere reviewed Northampton Town Council’s procurement and grants process. It was judged through a demonstration of the process from inception to completion in which no recommendations were made. It was highlighted that awaiting the organisation to provide their bank details before issuing their approved grant delayed the process however, this has now been resolved with bank details now included on the application form.

**MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:05PM**

Signed………………………………………. Chair