

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE – 11TH SEPTEMBER 2023

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11TH SEPTEMBER AT 6PM IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillors Marriott (Chair), Alwahabi, Birch, Connolly, Hallam, Haque, Holland-Delamere, Kilbride, Purser, Stevens and Tarasiewicz

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mr S Carter (Town Clerk), Mrs C Maclellan (Finance Officer) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Hibbert, Russell and Joyce

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hallam declared a pecuniary interest in minute 24 as a West Northamptonshire Council cabinet member he may have to vote on the matter of accommodation.

16. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND ASK QUESTIONS AS TO THE PROGRESS OF ANY ITEM

RESOLVED: The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th July 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings with the following amendments;

- Councillor Stevens was included as present
- Councillor Hallam clarified his declaration of interest was due to being a portfolio holder and held oversight of writing to the Independent Panel for Remuneration.

17. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING FOR INFORMATION:

The minutes of the Accounts Sub-Committee meeting held on 7th August was circulated at the meeting.

A Councillor highlighted that the amount of interest yielded on the Council's CLA Deposit Fund had been substantial.

A Councillor requested clarification on budget code 4511 Eid, the FO explained there £10,000 within the budget and the remaining balance from last financial year has been earmarked within reserves and the true amount will be reflected at the end of the financial year.

A Councillor posed increasing the amount Councillors were provided through their Councillor Community Fund as the cost of event or activities for local community groups had increased. It was explained that this would need to be discussed at the Community Services Committee, the budget meeting was upcoming. It was also noted that the publishing of Councillor Community Funding spending would also be for the Community Services Committee to discuss.

18. BUDGET WORKING GROUP – NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 5TH SEPTEMBER

The Budget Working Group notes were circulated at the meeting.

The Town Clerk stated actions received from the Budget Working Group:

- regarding mobile phone usage and sim-only deals;
- updated Cllr Community Grants Fund balance to be circulated to all Cllrs;

- Budget forecast undertaken by the FO and would be utilised for budget setting however, it is a hypothetical forecast.

A Councillor asked whether every officer required a mobile phone, in response the Town Clerk explained some officers require their phone more than others as they are off-site more often.

NOTED

19. BUDGET REPORT

Circulated with the agenda were the latest budgets detailing expenditure.

The FO explained between the Budgetary Report within the Account Sub-Committee minutes were very similar due to the closeness between their generation.

NOTED

20. BUDGET TIMETABLE 2024/25

Circulated with the agenda was a budget timetable.

The Town Clerk wanted to highlight the up and coming budget setting process would arrive shortly. He continued by posing that a Budget Working Group and additional Policy and Finance meeting could be held in December 2023 to enable chair to review each Committee budget prior to the budget being adopted.

AGREED: That a budget working group and Policy and Finance meeting be held in December prior to budget adoption in January 2024.

21. ASSET REGISTER REVIEW

The Town Clerk explained the report located within the agenda is a statutory requirement, was a record of any assets in excess of £150 is recorded. He continued, if an item was gifted it was generally listed as a nominal of £1 as demonstrated with the allotments within the document.

A Cllr raised there was a high number of monitors within the asset the register and currently reads as 26 monitors and posed whether there was a double entry.

A Cllr asked whether the Committee sets an amount for an item be included within the register and propose items in excess of £200 at time of purchase should be included in the asset register.

In response to a question, allotments are included as they are a fixed asset.

ACTION: To check the asset register for duplicates and presented at a future meeting,

AGREED: Items of the value in excess £200 at the time of purchase or gifting be included in the asset register.

DEFERRED

22. CCLA UPDATE

Included with the agenda was the latest information regarding the Council's cash investments with the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

The Town Clerk explained this would be a standard item and reoccurring item to ensure the committee was kept up-to-date with the return on the investment. Currently the fund was tracking at around 5%.

It was noted that information, including documents on the portfolio, returns etc on the [Public Sector Deposit Fund was available online.](#)

NOTED

23. PAPERLESS AGENDAS

The Town Clerk state he was in process of arranging a meeting with modern.gov and had discussed with WNC about having our software on dual-hatters laptops. Modern.Gov would work as it is web based however, Decisions may not be feasible to be installed on WNC issued devices and awaiting a meeting with a moder.gov representative. A cllr raised they had used convene.

Clerk's note: Meetings arranged with Convene, Decisions and Modern.gov and the working group.

24. ACCOMMODATION UPDATE

Cllr Hallam left the meeting.

The Town Clerk stated he had chased the representative at WNC however, nothing concrete had been received. In response to a question, meetings had been held with officials at WNC.

25. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION ON THE NEXT AGENDA

Asset register

MEETING CONCLUDED : 6:42 PM