

## **ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE – 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024**

MINUTES OF THE ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024 AT 11AM IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM, LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

**PRESENT:** Councillors Marriott (Chair), Birch, Evans, and Hibbert

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** S Carter (Town Clerk), C Maclellan (Responsible Finance Officer) and F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

### **10. APOLOGIES**

No apologies were submitted.

### **11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Birch declared a pecuniary interest in Deputy Mayor's expenses and a payment itemized on the payment list to the sum of £758.50.

### **12. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2024**

**RESOLVED:** The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

### **13. REVENUE BUDGET**

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) presented the Revenue Budget and highlighted budget codes where percentage spent had increased by 10% or more.

The RFO highlighted that Post 4110 had increased due to a payment made to the franking machine provider. As of 30th June 2024, 17.0% of the budget had been spent.

Advertising and Marketing under budget code 4140 had increased due to the purchase of the roadside boards for Abington Park, agreed at the Policy & Finance Committee with 87.7% of the budget had been spent.

A Councillor asked if there was an update in relation to the request for quotes for a new Payroll provider. The RFO explained that Webb House had been the chosen supplier following a request for quotes (RFQ) process. In response to a question from Cllrs She added, all providers who provided quotes were asked about their data handling and security of information. The RFO highlighted Webb House had confirmed all documentation was password protected and documents are held in secure filing cabinet, one of the benefits of the change meant Cllrs and Officers could access their payslip via a password protected online portal. The RFO stated she would inform the other providers that they were unsuccessful in the request for quotes.

The RFO commented that some expenses were claimed under the Deputy Mayor budget code 4209, with 35.8% of the budget was spent, and the Mayor's allowance had been paid under budget code 4210, with 26.0% of that budget spent. In relation to Councillors' allowances budget code 4212, the RFO explained this would increase from the next calendar month as two councillors were yet to provide their bank details.

The RFO explained that an interest payment was received from the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.

In relation to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a Councillor asked how much monies had been received from West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) since the Town Council's formation. The RFO explained the funds were within earmarked reserves and would report at the next meeting the total amount received. A Councillor commented the funds could be reclaimed if not used by WNC. The Town Clerk explained that CIL monies had to be used within 5-years of receiving the funds.

The RFO stated there under Public Events, Armed Forces Day budget code 4519 had seen an increase. In response to a question, the RFO stated it was possible that further invoices could be received in relation to the event

The RFO highlighted that there had been a change in the Councillor Community Fund budget code 4171, with 10.4% of the £75,000 budget spent.

The RFO highlighted an Out of Town Grant (budget code 4525) was awarded in the previous Grant Sub-Committee meeting hence a 10% of the budget being spent.

The Town Clerk noted that a water leak had been reported at the Billing Road allotment site, and a repair had been arranged. It was expected that the percentage spent under Repairs and Maintenance (budget code 4400) would be observed at a future meeting. Regarding allotments, a Councillor commented if the Community Governance Review (CGR) recommended the formation of a new parish council in the Abington Vale, Abington Park and Weston Favell Village then, the Graspin Lane and Billing Road allotments would fall within their area.

**RESOLVED:** The Revenue Budget was presented and reviewed.

**ACTION:** The RFO to check the amount received in CIL and when payments were received.

**ACTION:** Water costings for Graspin Lane and Billing Road allotments.

#### **14. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The RFO presented the Payment of Accounts, she explained the first table were payments made via Direct Debit and required retrospective approval. The RFO requested clarification in relation to CP69 Solarpress and asked why Tangerine Red were not used. The Democratic Services Officer explained the payment was for CGR leaflets and following request for quotes from Tangerine Red, Kalkwik and Able Print, Solarpress were identified as the most competitive

The RFO explained funds had been provided to Northampton Film Festival Limited for the Heritage Film about the Market Square.

The RFO stated that there was a large volume of invoices for Anglian Water, many related to Billing Lane, which would be cleared next month as an invoice had been received that would clear the credit balance.

The RFO explained that the invoice from Tompkins Creative Group Ltd hadn't yet been paid because we still waiting for some final assets to be transferred. A Councillor commented that there had not been much engagement with Councillors regarding the design of letterheads and business cards.

The Town Clerk explained that the Mayor's car had undergone a MOT, but it failed and required two new tyres which quotes had been sourced for. In response to a question about Bands in the Park, a Councillor explained that the owner of the Abington Park Café sponsored and paid for the bands directly on bank holiday Sundays.

The RFO explained that at the previous meeting, that £14,821.91 had been calculated as usual for payment to HMRC however, on receipt of the report it highlighted that SMP should also have been included in the calculation and deducted. The RFO added that the true amount of £13,142.17 was paid to HMRC

The RFO explained that a grant application was included on the payment list, but further information was required before payment could be made. Information was requested from the Community Engagement Officer, who was on sick leave the previous week.

**RESOLVED:** The Payment of Accounts presented and circulated and authorised for payment.

**ACTION:** Sara to provide details on engagement with branding and promotional material.

#### **15. BANK RECONCILIATION – TO BE TABLED**

The RFO explained the VAT Return for the quarter had been completed.

**RESOLVED:** The bank reconciliation and supporting documents for the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund and Unity Trust bank account were tabled, presented, reviewed and signed for accuracy.

#### **16. INTERNAL CONTROLS**

The RFO explained the internal controls check was completed with Councillors Lane and Russell. She added that Councillor Russell suggested whether hyperlinks could be used on the invoice register. Councillors Russell and Hallam would complete the next internal controls check.

**NOTED**

#### **17. RISK REGISTER**

The Town Clerk stated the RFO had completed some updates with its format on the spreadsheet, however, there had been no further updates since the previous meeting. The RFO explained the management team need to review the Risk Register further to ensure it is up to date and mitigation actions were accurate. In response to a question, the Town Clerk stated reviews of the risk register were required once annually, however, the Town Council reviewed it more frequently.

A Councillor suggested that “Tax Base Reduction” be increased to a higher risk due to the Community Governance being in its second stage of consultation. The Town Clerk explained some risks included on the risk register may never be de-categorised to green as the impact would be so severe.

**ACTION:** To update categorisation of risk from amber to red for the Reduction in tax base.

**ACTION:** The Management Team to review the Council’s business continuity plan.

#### **18. INTERNAL AUDITOR**

The Town Clerk stated the internal auditor was retiring and the council would need to source a new internal auditor. A Councillor posed whether the payroll provider could provide internal auditing services. The Town Clerk said this may cause a conflict of interest as they provide payroll services.

**MEETING CONCLUDED: 12:33PM**  
**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 12<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2024 AT 11AM**

**X**

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Councillor L. Marriott  
Chair of the Accounts Sub-Committee