

## **POLICY & FINANCE – 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2024**

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2024 AT 18:00 HOURS IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM, THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

**PRESENT:** Councillors Marriott (Chair), Evans (Vice Chair), Holland-Delamere, Hallam, Haque (from minute 24), Purser and Tarasiewicz.

**OFFICER PRESENT:** S Carter (Town Clerk), C MacLellan (Responsible Financial Officer – RFO)

### **15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were submitted by Councillors Hibbert, Birch and Connolly.

### **16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Hallam declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 24 as he is a WNC Cabinet member.

### **17. TO AUTHORISE THE CHAIR TO SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024 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 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

### **18. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR INFORMATION:**

The Chair referred to the following minutes and requested if there were any questions:

- a) Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024
- b) Minutes of the meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024
- c) Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the Account Sub-Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024, 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

The appointment of the internal audit and conclusion of audit as detailed in the minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> September were noted.

### **19. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE STAFFING SUB COMMITTEE MEETING DATED 10<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2024 AND TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee meeting dated 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 be received and **NOTED**.

### **20. BUDGET TIMETABLE**

Circulated with the agenda was a budget timetable highlighting the key dates for the committee and council. The committee discussed the potential impact of national budget changes, particularly the National Insurance increase, and the need to model these impacts across committees. The RFO explained that any increase could be built into the model. **NOTED**

### **21. CCLA DEPOSIT FUND UPDATE**

The committee noted the positive performance of the CCLA public deposit fund and expressed satisfaction with its secure daily access and stable income.

**RESOLVED:** That no changes be made to this investment.

## **21. PROPOSAL TO UNDERTAKE A REVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

The committee agreed to establish a working group, comprising Cllr Les Marriott (Chair), Cllr Evans, Cllr Birch and subject to his agreement Cllr Hibbert, to review the committee structure and delegations, with recommendations to be brought back to the committee and council.

**RESOLVED:** That a working group be established consisting of Cllr Marriott, Evans, Birch and Hibbert (If available).

**RESOLVED:** That the working group report back progress to the committee.

## **22. INTERNAL CONTROLS**

The committee noted the recent internal controls check, with no concerns raised. Cllrs Alwahabi, Haque and Evans would undertake the next check. **NOTED**

## **23. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The community governance review outcomes were reported and **NOTED**, with the committee acknowledging the importance of public engagement and consultation. There were to be no changes to the boundary of the town council area, with Mouton Leas, and Abington Park & Weston Favell being retained.

## **24. ACCOMMODATION UPDATE**

Councillor Hallam left the meeting for the following item.

Councillor Haque arrived at the meeting

The committee discussed the ongoing efforts to find new accommodation for the council, including proposals from WNC that the town council move into County Hall. Cllr Les Marriott and other members expressed concerns about the potential impact on the council's operations and heritage, and agreed to further explore other options.

The committee acknowledged the importance of public support and a coordinated political strategy in addressing the Guildhall issue. The need for a non-political approach to public engagement was emphasised. It was noted that the decision to relocate the town council and to find alternative uses for the extension were made by the cabinet therefore any hope rested on changing their mind by finding a financial solution or suitable alternative.

**NOTED**

## **25. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION ON NEXT AGENDA**

Nothing was noted under this item.

**MEETING CONCLUDED: 18:50**

At the conclusion of the meeting, Cllr Stevens undertook an independent bank reconciliation check inline with the council's Financial Regulations

### **Action Items:**

Explore the impact of national budget changes (possible NI changes) on the council's budget and model this across committees

Proceed with the committee structure review (Working group)

Follow up on the proposed accommodation options