



Policy and Finance Committee Meeting – 11th December 2024 – 18:00

To: Members of the Policy and Finance Committee:

Councillors Marriott (Chair), Evans (Vice Chair), Alwahabi, Birch, Connolly, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Holland-Delamere, Kilbride, Purser, Russell, Stevens, Tarasiewicz

Cc'd to all councillors for information

You are summoned to attend the Extraordinary meeting of the **Policy and Finance Committee** of Northampton Town Council to be held at 18.00 hrs on Wednesday 11th December 2024 in the Town Council Committee Room at Northampton Guildhall.

Public participation is welcomed in accordance with Standing Orders and the Council's Public Participation Policy

Stuart Carter
Town Clerk
5th December 2024

Guildhall
Northampton
NN1 1DE

A G E N D A

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. To authorise the Chair to sign the minutes of the last meeting and ask questions as to the progress of any item**
Minutes of the meeting held 15th July 2024 (p 3 – 4)
- 4. Policy and Finance Committee – Budget Element 2025/26**
To consider the draft Policy and Finance Committee element of the budget for 2025/26 (p 5 – p 8)
- 5. Professional and Legal Fees Budget**
Verbal report to be given
- 6. Accommodation Update**
Verbal report to be given
- 7. Items for consideration on the next agenda**

POLICY & FINANCE – 21ST OCTOBER 2024

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21ST 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 15TH 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 15th 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 12th August 2024
- b) Minutes of the meeting held on 9th September 2024
- c) Minutes of the meeting held on 14th October 2024

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

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

19. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE STAFFING SUB COMMITTEE MEETING DATED 10TH JULY 2024 AND TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

RESOLVED: The minutes of the Staffing Sub-Committee meeting dated 10th 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

Northampton Town Council

Policy and Finance Committee

11th December 2024

Budget Principles – report of Town Clerk

Purpose of report: To invite the Committee to consider the budget element under direct control of the Policy and Finance Committee

Recommended: i) That, the committee consider the draft elements and make comments accordingly

Following a meeting with the Chair of the committee an indicative budget has been drafted for the elements managed by the Policy and Finance Committee. These elements are considerable and incorporate the everyday workings of the council (staffing, insurance, IT etc, to the Mayoralty and the associated civic budget.

The proposed budget figures have been formulated taking into account the current spend, factors such as inflation, future forecast etc.

A narrative for many of the headings is detailed in the final column.

As members will be aware the process for setting the budget is as follows:

1. Policy and Finance Committee consider budget principles
2. Committees consider their elements and make recommendations
3. Policy and Finance Committee consider these and draft final budget for recommendation to the Council
4. Council considers final budget and subject to any final amendments approves the final budget in January
5. The precept request is sent to the WNC who are the precepting authority and collect it on behalf of town and parish councils and the police and fire authority.

A key element that is not yet known is the tax base, a provisional figure should come from WNC in later this month. The tax base at a basic level for Council tax purposes is the amount of properties in an area eligible to pay council tax. The tax base will be affected by the number of empty properties, discounts, people on benefits, the number of new properties built, council tax collection rates etc. The tax base is estimated and set by WNC.

Committee members should note that the budget with all the elements from the other committees will will come back to this committee in early January prior to it going to Council.

Budget 2025-2026
Forecasted Position 2024-2025

Code	Title	2024-25				Forecast				2024-25		
		Budget	Actual	Apr - Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL	Variance
4000	Salaries NI and Pension	597,000	278,179		41,922						320,101	276,899
4006	Recruitment	2,000	0		0						0	2,000
4010	Payroll Costs	1,600	956		120						1,076	524
4015	Travel and Subsistence	621	28		28						56	565
4027	Training and Staff Develo	10,000	1,740		140						1,880	8,120
4101	Office Supplies & Photocopy	5,000	2,257		748						3,005	1,995
4110	Post	2,060	350		0						350	1,710
4120	Subscriptions	14,000	9,290		100						9,390	4,610
4125	Telephone and Internet	6,600	3,549		720						4,269	2,331
4128	Information Technology	18,000	8,414		858						9,272	8,728
4130	Insurance	14,700	11,239		233						11,472	3,228
4140	Advertising and Marketing	8,300	7,294		560						7,854	446
4155	Accounting Support	4,120	868		0						868	3,252
4190	Equipment	12,000	692		0						692	11,308
	SUB TOTAL	696,001	324,856		45,429	0	0	0	0	0	370,285	325,716
	Corporate Management 105	Budget	Actual		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL	Variance
4150	Bank Charges	1,030	80		36						116	914
4156	Audit Fees	4,120	3,870		0						3,870	250
4159	Legal & Professional Fees	25,000	7,601		4,351						11,952	13,048
4162	Health & Safety	5,000	0		0						0	5,000
	SUB TOTAL	35,150	11,551		4,387	0	0	0	0	0	15,938	19,212

Expenditure
EMR
Income

2025-2026

Proposed Budget Comments

£ 621,312	Estimated - see workings
£ 1,000	reduce to £1000 to cover possible replacements.
£ 2,000	increase due to supplier change
£ 1,000	Propose to centralise and move all to cc Policy & Finance add £621 (101) and £100 (210) and £300 (315) spent £1199 in FY24
£ 10,000	No Change - to be used to encourage staff development - could reduce a little as on only £2410 spent in FY24
£ 5,000	no change likely to use full budget uszed £4909 in FY24
£ 1,300	Based on last 3 years average spend and £1208 in FY24
£ 14,000	On track to use? Spent £8978 in FY24
£ 9,135	increase of £2700 based on FY24 spend of £8682 plus 5%
£ 18,900	RPI 5% applied
£ 30,333	Propose to centralise and move 4130 from all CC to 4130 101: £14700 (101) + £4906 (110) + £10727 (315)
£ 23,000	centralise- move 4140 from all cc to Policy & Finance add £1030(110) and £1000 (210) and £12000 (315) total should be £22,330 excluding what Connor has spent £185 as there was no budget for it. Consider additional costs may be required in the event we move premises - increase budget or use Reserves? Propose any unspent money this year is earmarked to support next years costs.
£ 1,000	Reduced as we no longer have regular Accounting support but will do for year end closing Rialtas. YE support cost £868 this year
£ 12,000	Applied same as last year on the basis will be earmarked for future purchase of
£ 749,980	£53,979.38

Proposed Budget Comments

£ 500	based on last yr's actual of £165 and forecast of this yr 6*12+3*12+28* plus a little contingency
£ 4,120	leave as is which is this years cost of 3870*5%
£ 30,000	Increase of £5k as we may need it in relation to accomodation and Potential HR support
£ 3,000	Reduced on the basis that so far we haven't spent any budget this year.
£ 37,620	£2,470.00

Civic and Democratic	Budget	Actual	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL	Variance	Proposed Budget Comments
4130 Insurance	4,906	4,810	0						4,810	96	Propose to centralise and move to 4130 Policy & Finance
4140 Advertising and Market	1,030	284	84						368	662	Centralise and move to 4140 101
4200 Elections	40,000	0	0						0	40,000	No change but note that any overspend must come from earmarked reserves. Note that costs are indicated to be £67k
4203 Civic Reception & May	8,940	6,745	0						6,745	2,195	No change
4204 Civic Oak Apple Day	1,600	2,129	0						2,129	-529	Event to cover enhancement re the Great Fire/ potential of a VIP visit meaning additional hospitality (does not include security or Stageright) may need to agree additional cost if there is going to a VIP
4207 Civic - Service	1,345	350	0						350	995	No Change
4208 Mayoral Activity	8,000	2,343	0						2,343	5,657	No Change
4209 Deputy Mayor	2,000	716	0						716	1,284	No Change
4210 Mayoral Allowance	6,600	3,363	550						3,913	2,687	Consider uplift?
4211 Mayors Transport	26,009	11,235	2,067						13,302	12,707	Lizzie to review rational for potential transport cost increase.
4212 Councillor Allowances	35,060	14,024	0						14,024	21,036	inline with WNC 4.1% increase this year so £1395.70 plus 4.5% for FY25/26
4213 Councillor Training/Cor	5,150	580	567						1,147	4,003	based on training needed for potential new Cllrs following election
4214 Civic Events (Contingent	3,815	185	0						185	3,630	For Les to decide / further discussion - move FY25 expenditure send detail to Lizzie
4215 Civic Regalia	4,500	4,340	0						4,340	160	Lizzie to determine spec for future badges given risk with the supplier
4216 Council Meetings & Ro	2,000	1,217	318						1,535	465	leave as is given unknown situation with the Guildhall accommodation
4217 Civic Contingency	6,000	0	0						0	6,000	For Les to decide /further discussion
4517 Remembrance Day	2,000	0	0						0	2,000	propose to centralise and move 4517 from 315 (£10,000) and add to 4517 110 £2000
4519 Armed Forces	250	150	0						150	100	Propose to centralise and move £5000 to 4519 110 and add to £250
4540 Town Twinning	1,000	0	0						0	1,000	Remove and add £1000 to 4217 Civic Contingency
SUB TOTAL	160,205	52,471	3,586	0	0	0	0	0	56,057	104,148	£11,277.13
Other Cost and Income 115	Budget	Actual	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL	Variance	Proposed Budget Comments
1001 CIL	0	14,245	0						14,245	-14,245	
1176 Precept received	#####	#####	0						#####	0	
1190 Interest Received	50,000	60,815	11,573						72,388	-22,388	
SUB TOTAL	#####	#####	11,573	0	0	0	0	0	#####	-36,633	
The Guildhall 201	Budget	Actual	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	TOTAL	Variance	Proposed Budget Comments
4300 Service Charge	84,700	34,288	0						34,288	50,412	
4390 Accommodation Reser	108,000	0	0						0	108,000	
SUB TOTAL	192,700	34,288	0	0	0	0	0	0	34,288	158,412	

Income	#####
Expenditure	#####

£	1,861,000
£	1,151,783

Difference of £ 67,727 based on an increase in Payroll and centralising A&M / Insurance / T&S / Remembrance / Armed Forces and small % uplifts on other nominal codes