

ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 10TH JULY 2023 AT 11AM
IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE ROOM LOCATED IN THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON

PRESENT: Councillors Marriott (Chair), Birch, Hibbert and Purser

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

13. APOLOGIES

No apologies were submitted

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests

15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th May 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

The Finance Officer (FO) circulated a breakdown of the Bloom Budget that was requested at the previous meeting. A Councillor raised that the report would be beneficial to gain insight into the Bloom Budget expenditure. The FO explained in response to a question posed, that the Bloom Budget had a budget of £60,000 and it would be for the Environmental Services Committee to decide on any amendments to the annual budget during budget setting scheduled for November 2023. A Councillor raised that the watering costs would be dependent on the temperature and amount of rainfall over the summer months.

The FO explained in relation to the benchmarking of RTC Medical that Stage Right Productions Ltd complete their own internal benchmarking of supplier and had recommended RTC Medical to the Events Team. The Town Clerk stated Stage Right Productions Ltd were an experienced organisation and their services were procured nationally for events therefore, they were able to make recommendations of supplier and could receive best value. A Councillor requested that a copy of the Town Council's contract with Stage Right Ltd be provided at the next meeting. A Councillor questioned whether the Town Council could request evidence that RTC Medical's staff had the necessary credentials. The FO explained that RTC Medical would hold relevant documents that shown the staff provided were adequately trained.

The Town Clerk explained he had reached out to the Town Council's insurance provider for clarification on what capacity Councillors were covered however, he was still waiting a response and would provide an update at the following meeting.

16. REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24

The FO circulated the budgetary report for month ending June 2023 and explained she had highlighted items that had movement of 10% or more. The FO highlighted the following budget codes:

Budget Code 40140 - Pay Roll Costs had increased to 93.3%.

The FO explained 93% included the committed expenditure for the annual payroll costs and had increased as the payroll for Councillors' allowances was processed.

Budget Code 4015 - Travel and Subsistence had increased to 29.1%

The FO stated Travel and Subsistence had increased as the Town Clerk attended a conference and had been reimbursed for the fuel expenses and an overnight stay.

Budget Code 4120 – Subscriptions had increased to 90.5%

The FO explained subscriptions had increased as payments had been made for memberships to professional bodies like SLCC and NACO.

Budget Code 4125 – Telephone and Internet had increased to 33.4%

The FO stated that invoices had been received for line and internet leases from Horizon Telecomm.

Budget Code 4209 – Mayoral Allowance had increased to 40%

The FO explained there had been sizeable increase compared to the previous meeting due to a payment to the former Mayor for his Mayoral Allowances for the month of May 2023 as well as the sitting Mayor's allowance.

Budget Code 1190 – Interest Received had increased to 235%

The FO was pleased to explain that a higher amount of interest had been received on the Council's deposit and presumed it was due to the increase in interest rates of savings and current accounts.

Budget Code 4300 – Service Charge had increased to 89.1%

The FO explained a purchase order was raised for the Service Charge to remain in the Guildhall for the entirety of the Financial Year. In response to a question, the FO stated she believed the rate had increased by roughly 3%.

RESOLVED: The budgetary report for the month ending June 2023 was circulated and reviewed.

17. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The FO highlighted the first two items within the Pay List were deductions for the former Mayor's Charities, St Vincent De Paul's Society and the Army Benevolent Fund these had been posted however, she raised the amount differed slightly from the amount announced during Full Council as some donations were paid directly to the Charities on behalf of Cllr Meredith.

The FO explained the monthly bank account charge of £18 had been deducted, in addition to Xerox's quarterly copier lease charge. She continued to highlight that the Direct Debit for the Lloyd's Bank Card had been arranged for a payment of £179.37 and the breakdown had been itemized in the description. In response to a question, the Town Clerk clarified he manages the bank card and all payments must be authorised by himself.

A Councillor raised that the Extraordinary Council meeting lasted less than 30 minutes and the room hire had costed £120.15. In response the Town Clerk explained that the room was hired thirty-minutes prior and after the meeting to facilitate set-up and breakdown of the room. The Democratic Services Officer added that the charges for room hire depended on the time of day with weekends and after 8pm being more expensive and she would happily provide him with a booking form for his information.

In response to a question posed by a Councillor, the FO stated that Zen Office were a supplier who was used for the purchase of some stationary items, refreshments and biscuits for meetings.

The FO explained that included in the Pay List was a Sale section as a Mr Evans had made an overpayment to the Town Council and therefore the £200 difference was to be repaid to him.

The FO stated in relation to Salaries, HMRC and Pension payments in the July 2023 the report would be revised as it should have included the increments awarded backdated to April 2023. She added that the payroll provider does not complete these calculations, therefore she had to do this herself and it had been very time consuming. A Councillor commented that the payroll provider provided great affordability to complete Officers and Councillor's payroll and requested the FO contact them to see if they were able to provide a quotation to include calculations within their service.

RESOLVED: The payments as detailed in the Payment of Accounts be approved.

18. INTERNAL CONTROLS

The FO explained Councillors Birch and Purser had completed the previous Internal Controls Checklist in May 2023 however, the next Internal Controls Checklist would need to take place in September 2023 therefore, Councillor Purser would need to nominate another Councillor to attend.

AGREED: That Councillors Hibbert and Purser would complete Internal Controls Check for Quarter 2 of Financial Year 23-24.

19. INTERNAL CONTROLS AUDIT – EMAIL TO CLLRS

The FO explained that the Internal Auditors had completed their report and within their feedback it was advised no Internal Controls were completed within the month of August 2022. A Councillor raised that the month of August was an informal recess as some Councillors go on holiday. The FO stated that she had also explained to the Internal Auditors that the Internal Controls procedure had changed since August 2022 and this was first put into practice in February 2023.

20. RISK REGISTER

The Town Clerk explained the risk register was now formatted as an excel spreadsheet and he had tasked the Assistant Town Clerk to review options that would assist in managing Officers' wellbeing. The Town Clerk wanted to make the Sub-Committee aware he had been completing work on benchmarking and reviewing paperless agenda systems and if the Council was to proceed then it may require a new form of IT equipment and software.

In response to a question, the Town Clerk stated he had not received any further information regarding the Town Council's lease agreement to use the Guildhall that could cease March 2024.

RESOLVED: The risk register was presented and reviewed.

21. FURTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The FO presented the cashbook and bank statement for month ending June 2023 and the closing amounts aligned.

MEETING CONCLUDED: 12:20PM