

ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE

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

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

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

96. APOLOGIES

No apologies were submitted, all members were present.

97. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

98. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Chair be authorised to sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th April 2023 as a true and accurate record.

99. REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24

The budgetary report for the month ending April 2023 was tabled.

The Finance Officer (FO) explained she had highlighted some budget lines that had either increased significantly since the last meeting or been overspent.

The Chair explained the Civic Robes were ordered last year and was paid in two segments from last and this financial year's budget. It was noted that the Northampton in Bloom budget was at 80% of the allocated budget, though some of this was for committed expenditure for the year and in the lead up to summer was when the majority of the budget would be spent. The FO explained she would request a breakdown of Northampton in Bloom budget and information on how the watering would be costed.

Regarding the Virtual Heritage Tour budget, it was highlighted that a purchase order had been raised and funds therefore committed however, no invoice had been received yet.

In response to a question, the FO explained that not all invoices for Eid in the Park had been received.

RESOLVED: The Budgetary Report for month ending April 2023 was circulated and reviewed.

ACTION: Northampton in Bloom breakdown report of what posted and watering costs

100. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Tabled for the Sub-Committee was a list of payments for approval as attached to these minutes.

A Councillor asked whether the Eid Management Group would manage the finances themselves as it requires a high-volume of officers' time to create purchase orders and the invoicing. A Councillor suggested that staffing costs be costed to the all event's budgets to provide a true reflection of the events cost. The Town Clerk explained that with Eid in the Park it was agreed the Town Council would hold the funds to ensure the funds were being spent accordingly.

A Councillor suggested that moving forward events proposed should be supported by a Management Committee that include volunteers to assist and this could mitigate the reliance on officers' time. A Councillor commented there had been successful events however, a review could be required to ensure event workload could be managed and ensure Officers supporting the event have a good balance. It was explained that a Project and Event Proposal form was being drafted that would consider all these factors with the aim of presenting a fuller picture to the relevant committee when considering a proposal.

The FO explained an item had been costed incorrectly under Climate Emergency and this would be journalled to be corrected.

In response to a question regarding Horizon, the FO explained the Council in its first year had entered a 5-year lease agreement for the landline system, however, the mobile phone contract was for two years. Options on renewal or sim only contracts were now being investigated with sim-only seeming to be the best option.

The FO explained that RT Medical provide first aid to the events the Council host. In response to a question, the Town Clerk explained that St John's Ambulance and Red Cross do provide similar services however, they still charged. It was agreed that provision of first aid at council events be looked at.

The FO explained a suggested bank transfer from Unity Bank Account to the CCLA Bank Account had been included on the payment of accounts.

RESOLVED: That the payments as detailed in the list be approved.

101. BANK RECONCILIATION

The FO provided copies of the cashbook and Unity Bank account statement and explained the amounts reconcile.

NOTED

102. INTERNAL CONTROLS

The Finance Officer stated Councillor Birch and Purser would attend an internal controls exercise on 22nd May 2023.

It was noted that officers had introduced an internal payroll check. This was done by the Clerk by nominating an officer at random. The FO then provided the relevant paperwork which the Clerk checked to ensure hours worked, amount paid etc were correct and in accordance with what was calculated.

NOTED

103. RISK REGISTER

The Town Clerk explained that as part of continuity planning that the Assistant Town Clerk be deputised to authorise purchase orders, invoices in his absence. In addition, it was recommended that the Assistant Town Clerk be authorised to approve all purchase orders and invoices in relation to events given that she managed the events team.

RESOLVED: That the Assistant Town Clerk be given delegated authority to approve POs, invoices etc in relation to events.

RESOLVED: That in the absence of the Town Clerk due to annual leave/sickness the Assistant Town Clerk be authorised to approved POs, invoices etc.

The Town Clerk explained he was yet to hear a response from West Northamptonshire Council in relation to the Council's accommodation, he added he consulted legal advice who advised judicial review would not be warranted. It was posed by a Councillor that the Clerk contact WNC's Chief Executive regarding the Council's accommodation in the Guildhall.

104. FURTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The FO requested feedback on how information has been presented at Accounts Sub-Committee and if there was anything that could improve the process or no longer useful.

It was agreed the next Accounts Sub-Committee meeting would be held on 15th June 2023.

The meeting closed at 12.10 hours.

X

Substitute Chair of Accounts Sub-Committee