

**MINUTES FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held Friday 19<sup>th</sup>  
November 2021 at 10.00am at Town Hall FIN REP 11.21**



Present – Cllr Betts, Cllr Bradbury, Cllr Flunder, Cllr Jordan, Cllr Ladd Also, present Town Clerk

1. **Apologies:** To receive apologies for absence.  
No apologies for absence

2. **Declarations of interest:**

- a) To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda. Nil
- b) To receive any declarations of Pecuniary Interest regarding the agenda. Nil.
- c) To receive any request for dispensations regarding the agenda. Nil.
- d) To receive details of any lobbying to members. Nil.

3. **Matters from the public.**

*The purpose of the meeting is for Councillors to discuss Town Council business and whilst the attendance of electors is welcomed, they are not allowed to join in the discussions of the Councillors. During each meeting the Council will adjourn for a period for public questions. During this time, electors can put questions to the Chairman regarding matters on the agenda. Where possible, the Chairman will respond but the matter may have to be deferred and placed on a later month's agenda for discussion.*

Nil.

4. **Minutes of the last meeting October 2021** – The Minutes of the REP 10/2021 meeting had been presented at full Council and were approved and signed.

5. **Update on Management accounts 2021/2022**

The management accounts to end October 2021 were presented by the RFO and discussed on a line-by-line basis for each individual account code. The Town Clerk explained to members the entries as displayed on the management accounts.

*Expenditure*

Salaries/pensions are in line with full year budget.

Insurance premiums paid monthly in line with direct debit mandate.

Software and support include the Microsoft 365 system that is now being used in the office and Councillors will receive training in due course.

Business rates and standing charges for services paid as per direct debits.

Kilcock toilets –Norse are considering changing the ESC toilets to cashless systems and will let STC have details as/when they are available. The Toilets are now closed until Xmas.

Donations general budget has been increased as previously agreed. Thanks were received from the Arts Centre for the donation to their sound system.

Capital works at 13 Station Road are now complete.

After full discussion, there were no matters of concern to highlight noted by the Finance Cttee within the 7-month accounts relating to expenditure.

Expenditure £227,222 for the 7 months.

Income to the end October 2021 is £298,966 including grant income of £23,248.

CIL income is 11,541 for 2021/22. Total CIL income to year end 2021 is in accounts at £36,827.

CIL - Discussion took place regarding the spending of CIL income within the required timescales. The meeting was advised of the discussions which took place in Sustainable Travel Group of potentially requesting some of the CIL funding be used for warning signage for Potters Bridge. Cllr Jordan, as Clerk to Reydon P C, advised that the Parish Council had voted against supporting the use of some of their CIL funding for new warning signs for Potters Bridge.

As per Sustainable Travel notes, Town Clerk will find out more information about the signage and make initial contact with SCC. It was suggested that in view of the public interest in Potters Bridge that a link be placed from the Town Council website to the SCC website so that people could see any updates provided by SCC.

**After full discussion it is recommended that Council approves in principle to allocate some of its CIL funding for warning signage for the B1127 – subject to; other stakeholders also providing funding, costs being ascertained, and subject to the necessary agreements from SCC ref the placement and use of the signage.**

The month end management accounts and bank reconciliations for October 2021 were reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Cttee and signed off as required.

6. **Station Road redevelopment project.**

Project Board meeting had been held yesterday and the following was explained to members; LEP funding application has been submitted for consideration and decision should be known next week. Other funding opportunities are now available such as SIGF, and ESC will advise on the application process.

Costs – members were advised that the project is presently considered by the design team to be over budget, and that they had been reviewing costs in light of this. Value Engineering of the project had taken place and cost savings of circa £60k can be made with minimal impact to the construction plans. Other value engineering suggestions were made that could see a further £75k of cost reductions, but it was considered that some of these would have an adverse impact on the project i.e the potential removal of the mezzanine floor. Inflation costs of £114k had been included within the calculations. Members were advised that this had been calculated at 3% as per the RCIS standard industry guidelines but present inflation rates are now higher than this. The tender package is being collated in order that this may go out before Xmas. Actual costs will only be ascertained once the tenders are returned. It has been agreed that the Design Team will leave in those aspects that are deemed important to the project such as the mezzanine floor, and tenderers will be asked to place a cost on these individual items to assist any other discussions which might need to take place regarding cost reduction.

Tenders – the design team would like to undertake a PQQ process to ensure that tenderers are considered capable of completing the project. Discussion had taken place regarding the suggested criteria – the Finance Cttee asked that a specific question was asked regarding cost control management and that this be given its own assessment weighting. Agreed by all cttee members.

Operators – the draft H of T is presently being drawn up by solicitors which will then be made available to potential operators. Council will need to consider the return that it would wish to receive and agree H of T.

7. **Governance Policies to consider** – Nil.

8. **Financial considerations/requests**

IT Equipment to maximise office use of Microsoft 365 – All of the office work is now undertaken by using the new system, but it has become apparent that to improve efficiencies, upgrades are **required to the desktop computers – cost in region of £1700 for upgraded hardware for both staff. It was agreed by all to recommend approval of this expenditure.**

Donation requests – **Further to previous approval, Southgen has now advised that it would like the Town Council donation to the library to go specifically towards the cost of the kitchenette (£1600), and the creation of a window seat for children (£400.) Agreed to recommend approval.**

Donation application received from Tennis Club for assistance towards new clubhouse and improvements to the courts. Discussion about the support that Council might wish to consider. It was agreed that the Tennis Club would be asked for a breakdown of the costs in order that Council could potentially select one part of the project to support. It was suggested that if this is greater than the present donations budget, then it could be considered within the budgeting for 2022/2023 as a standalone donation within the budget.

Suffolk Growth Town Centre Grants – the Town Council has received £4500 from this grant programme to assist with wayfaring signage around the High Street and to improve the Town App.

Bonds – members were advised that Felixstowe Town Council has just invested sums in a Close Brothers Bond which fits all of the criteria of their Investment Strategy. More details to be requested as this might be appropriate for some of the balances held by Town Council.

Budget 2022/2023 and Precept 2022/2023. ESC has advised that the precept must be requested by 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The budget and precept will therefore need to be agreed prior to this date. Meeting dates to be considered for Dec/Jan to ensure that this date is met. Members will need to consider the projects/requests from all committees/Council to enable budget to be prepared.

9. **Date of next committee meeting** – 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 9am.

**After full discussion it is recommended that Council approves in principle to allocate some of its CIL funding for warning signage for the B1127 – subject to; other stakeholders also providing funding, costs being ascertained, and subject to the necessary agreements from SCC ref the placement and use of the signage.**

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**Exclude Public and Press:** Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is agreed by all that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following.

Staffing/ Property rental matters tenders /lease negotiations– see confidential minutes CONFID Fin 11/2021.