



**MINUTES of the FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held on
Thursday 17th June 2021 at 2pm at the Town Hall**

FIN REP 06.21

Present – Cllr Betts, Cllr Bradbury, Cllr Flunder and Cllr Jordan.

Also, present – Town Clerk and 2 members of the public.

1. **Apologies:** To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr Ladd.

2. **Chairman 2021/22** – to elect Chairman for 2021.22.

On the proposal of Cllr Bradbury, seconded by Cllr Jordan, it was agreed by all to appoint Cllr Betts as Chair of Finance cttee for 2021/2022. Approved.

3. **Declarations of interest:**

a) To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda. Cllr Flunder declared a personal interest in the donation request from Sole Bay Arts CIO.

b) To receive any declarations of Pecuniary Interest regarding the agenda. Nil

c) To receive any request for dispensations regarding the agenda. Nil

4. **Matters from the public.**

A member of the public had written in with the following statement/question; *the Chairman of the cttee should be aware of the tender package documents for demolition. There are numerous problems associated with this that would allow any contractor to charge significant sums outside the contract awarded. What contingency plans are in place?*

Discussion took place. Members were advised that the Project Managers had confirmed that this was standard practice for such a procurement. It was agreed that this would be raised again with the Project Managers at the next Project Board meeting.

Discussion also about a revised letter of Intent that had been requested from Project Managers - Town Clerk to contact Project Managers.

5. **Minutes of the last meeting rep 5.2021 April 2021** – agreed by Town Council at the last meeting.

6. **Management accounts 2021/2022.**

The management accounts to end May 2021 were presented by the RFO and discussed on a line-by-line basis for each individual account code. The actual spend for each account code was considered against budget. There had only been a few entries during the first 2 months. The Town Clerk talked members through the entries as displayed on the management accounts.

Salaries/ pensions etc are as per budget.

Insurance premiums are paid monthly in line with direct debit mandate.

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

After full discussion, there were no matters of concern to highlight noted by the Finance Cttee within the 2-month accounts relating to expenditure.

Income to the end May 2021 is £61,959 which includes grant funding of £2k for Ferry Road Garden, and £2k for Town Ambassadors for the summer – expenditure £-22,249. The income was lower than anticipated due to some late payments of rent – discussions will take place with respective tenants to make appropriate arrangements.

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

7. **Audit 2020-2021 – Internal audit - Matters to consider.**

There is one recommendation within the internal audit for the Finance cttee to consider the wording of the online payments system as described in the Internal Control Statement. Revised wording to be considered at the next Finance cttee meeting.

8. **Other Finance matters**

Fidelity Guarantee Insurance had not been highlighted as an action point in the internal audit – but the cttee themselves had asked for further discussion on this, as the cover is presently less than the balances held.

The Town Clerk read out correspondence from the insurers who advised that although there are recommendations from auditors about minimum levels of cover, there are several of their councils who do not cover full balances – as it is the consideration of ‘risk’ that needs to be assessed. So long as Council undertakes all measures stated in the Internal Control Statement then ‘risk’ should be relatively low. If the control measures are not implemented, then Council might be deemed to not have taken appropriate action and cover may be invalidated.

After full discussion it was agreed to recommend that Fidelity Insurance remains at the present level of £2m and that council seek to reduce ‘risk’ further by also looking at transferring additional funds into CCLA.

Balances held – Discussion took place, following the above, about the proposal to transfer additional funds to the CCLA Deposit account. This account provides Money Market Fund (MMF) which is AAA rated, Low Risk, provides daily access, Diversification, Yield, and is across 51 institutions.

After full discussion it was agreed that an additional transfer of £500k would be recommended from the bank balances into the CCLA. This would then reduce bank balances accordingly by £500k whilst the total investment at CCLA would be £800k. This would also assist with the Fidelity Cover limits as described above.

Property Governance Structure – Further discussions held with Price Bailey with regards to commissioning advice on the options for a future Property Governance Structure for the Council to consider. **After full discussion it was agreed to recommend that the Town Council engage Price Bailey at a cost of £6500 to provide an initial options appraisal for a new property governance structure that would assist with the requirements of; safeguarding continual ownership, ability to undertake purchases and sales whilst safeguarding the funds for capital use and providing appropriate tax solutions.**

Terms of reference of committees – to be considered at a future meeting.

Transfer of council data to cloud-based system – This is due to commence in July.

Rural Payments Agency Grant - refer also to L and E minutes. **Members agreed that the grant should be accepted prior to the deadline as being recommended by L and E cttee.**

Donations

The following requests were considered.

Donation request from Southgen for £2000. After full discussion it was agreed to recommend approving the request subject to Southgen advising details of an asset that needs to be purchased for this sum – with a preferred option being to assist with something for the library part of the building.

Donation request from Sole Bay Arts CIO for £5000 for audio equipment. After full discussion it was agreed to recommend approving the request. Contact will be made to see if the system would be portable and be able to be used by members of the community in other buildings.

Donation's budget.

With the recommendations above – the donations budget for 2021.22 has been exceeded. After full discussion it was agreed to recommend that a virement of £10k takes place from the PCSO funding to the donations budget so that there is a budget for the remainder of the year.

9. Date of next meeting – Monday 19th July at 10am

If Required

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

Property rental matters/consideration of commercial quotes/ staffing matters

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