

Finance and General Purposes Committee
21st June 2021 7.30pm
Meeting held online at zoom – meeting as a
temporary working group



Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this Committee.

Present:

Councillor J Moody (Chair)
Councillor P Siggers (Vice Chair)
Councillor A Sandiford
Councillor V Haval
Councillor D Chandran
Councillor A Thompson

Officer: Mrs J Wheeler, Town Clerk
Callum Stacey – Committee Clerk

Also present:

Cllr P Davies; Cllr D Rouane; Cllr E Hards (Deputy Leader) and three members of the public.

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including Callum Stacey – a new member of staff.

19. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr A Dearlove.

20. Declarations of interests

Cllr V Haval declared a personal interest in the confidential item 16 on the agenda.

21. To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 24th May 2021

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record.

22. Questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

The question from Cllr V Haval would be covered in item 8 on the agenda.

23. To receive any grant applications

The Food Festival had submitted some further information to support a second application for a grant. Unfortunately this information did not reach the Councillors in time to enable the Committee to consider the supporting papers. It was AGREED to defer this application to the next Finance meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow public participation.

Cllr P Davies spoke regarding the need to get the Willowbrook building open to hirers as quickly as possible. He spoke of the informal meetings with two consultants who both outlined ways that the building could be opened.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

24. To note the end of year unaudited accounts as at 31st March 2021

The end of year accounts were received and noted. Cllr V Haval wished to clarify that the recorded debt from the PCN would show in the end of year accounts but would be recommended as a credit as they were duplications and manual invoices had been raised and paid.

25. To review and recommend the Annual Governance & Accountability Return – AGAR to full Council

The Committee reviewed the accounting statements in the AGAR. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the AGAR be approved by full Council at the meeting on 28th June 2021.

26. To review the accounts and payments for May 2021

The accounts and payments for May 2021 were noted. It was confirmed that the figure in brackets for cost centre 1171 contingency was shown as an accrual. The extra report on the aged debtors was reviewed. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the credit notes listed be approved.

27. To review the signing of the bank reconciliations

It was AGREED that Cllr A Sandiford would take a turn with Cllr V Haval in reviewing and signing off the bank reconciliations every quarter. This was a recommendation in the internal auditors report last year which has been carried out.

28. To consider the attached strategic risk assessment

It was AGREED to defer this item to the July meeting as there were suggested changes that had not been included on this version.

29. To consider and note the report from the internal auditor

It was AGREED to note the recommendations and ask the Town Clerk to put together an action plan. Cllr V Haval spoke of her concerns on recommendation two “to ensure that effective segregation of duties between the approval of payments, setting them up online and then physically releasing them”. The concern was that this requirement would slow down the approval process and may not be practical if there

was a risk that the payments could expire whilst waiting for approval. Cllr V Haval did however approve of the idea of a photographic asset register. The Town Clerk was asked to bring an action plan and impact assessment to the August Finance meeting.

30. To consider the effectiveness of the internal audit

The Clerk had prepared a review of the internal audit. It was AGREED to note the report and bring amendments back to the August Finance meeting.

31. To review the quotes for a new telephone system

This item had been brought to this Committee several times and the quotes had been refreshed. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to appoint company D on a twelve month contract.

32. To review the quotes for decoration of Willowbrook

There was a discussion as to the state of repair of the building. The Clerk was asked to action clearing out the equipment which was broken and not fit for use. The lighting of the main sports hall was also in need of attention. The Property & Facilities Manager would be asked to get quotes to replace with LED lighting – this would not only last longer but would be cost efficient and support the Council's pledge to address climate change with their projects.

It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers and seconded by Cllr A Sandiford and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that company C be asked to go ahead with the decoration.

33. To note the progress report on items not on this agenda

The Town Clerk reported back that after the CCTV Management meeting it was possible to liaise with the police on the best position for the additional CCTV camera. The Councillors still wished to address whether they would have to pay for the extra camera or whether the Council was "owed" the camera. The Clerk also said that it would be possible for CCTV cameras to be put in Edmonds Park and monitored by the control room.

34. Exclusion of the press and public

RESOLVED: pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

35. To consider the advice for assistance with procurement of tenders for Willowbrook and the options open to the Council

The discussion is detailed in a separate confidential report – Appendix A. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the tender document for a procurement consultant be amended to include the option of opening Willowbrook in-house. This amended document will go to the full Council for approval at the meeting on 28th June 2021.

Meeting closed at 9.08pm

Signed _____ Chairman Date _____