

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017 AT THE CIVIC HALL, POYNTON**

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr C Gorst

Cllrs: M Beanland, L A Clarke, G King, H Murray, Mrs J Saunders, G Smith,

65. To note if anyone attending, or present, at the Committee meeting is making or intends to make, an audio recording or film of the meeting.

It was noted that a recording of the meeting was being made by the Deputy Town Clerk for the purpose of writing the minutes.

66. Questions from members of the public

No members of the public were present

66. Apologies for absence

Cllrs: Mrs T Lorde, L Podmore

67. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

None.

68. Previous meeting minutes

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2016 are approved as an accurate record (NC)**

69. To receive and consider the interim internal audit report 2016/2017

The Clerk spoke to the internal audit report for 2016/17 and the advice from JDH Business Services Ltd. The Clerk has included an action plan column in the report.

The following issues were identified:

- There is no document retention policy in place. A model policy has been sent to the Clerk by the auditors. The length of time that documents need to be retained will depend upon the nature of the document.

- Old documents are currently stored in the loft of the Civic Hall. A review should be undertaken of where documents are stored as it may be appropriate for some to be sent to the Cheshire Records Office. The Clerk will draft a policy for agreement by the F&GP committee.
- Whilst the payments schedule is regularly scrutinised by the F &GP committee, the Chairman of the Committee has signed the front sheet of a bundle of documents and not each individual page. Going forward the Chairman will sign each individual page.
- The risk assessment needs to be updated to include disaster recovery and business continuity issues relating to council records and documents. Computer files are regularly backed up onto cloud storage in the UK and the risk assessment needs to be updated to include this. No systems are in place for paper documents.

**Question: What would be the situation if we had to set up in new offices tomorrow following a fire?**

*Answer: We would have immediate access to emails and electronic documents but we don't have all the documents scanned in. We have documents going back to the Second World War.*

Digitising the records should be considered going forward.

Recommendations from the 2015/2016 audit have been implemented.

The internal audit for 2014/2015 drew Members attention to the guidance note relating to two signatures on cheques. Whilst this is no longer a requirement, the Task and Finish group would still wish to have double signatures in place to authorise expenditure.

**RESOLVED: That the internal audit report for 2016/2017 is received (NC)**

70. To receive an update on the revisions to the Town Council's Financial Regulations by the Task and Finish group.

The group met to discuss the Financial Regulations. It was agreed that the Clerk should draft revisions to the current regulations and submit these to the Task and Finish Group before being presented to the F &GP committee in March. It was also agreed that the Council should move towards electronic banking as quickly and safely as possible. A meeting with the bank manager will be arranged by the Clerk. It was noted that the issue of the bank mandate should be raised with the bank manager.

**RESOLVED: That the verbal update from the Clerk is received (NC)**

71. To receive and consider an update from the Deputy Clerk relating to challenging the non-domestic business rates 2015.

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the appeal had been lodged by Richard Wackett but as yet no case officer has been assigned by the Valuation Office.

**RESOLVED: That the verbal report is received (NC)**

72. To receive and consider the draft media release regarding the 2017/2018 precept

The format has been changed to place more emphasis on what the Council does in the Town. Key areas of expenditure beyond the control of the Town Council have also been identified in the press release. It was proposed that Cllr Clarke would review the presentation of the press release.

**RESOLVED: That Cllr Clarke revise the press release.**

73. To receive and note the income and expenditure report to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 for the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Town Council

The Committee members reviewed the income and expenditure report for the Committee. A number of savings and significant expenditure were outlined to the Committee. Civic Hall bookings are increasing and whilst it is unlikely that the target of £40,000 will be reached, it was hoped that an income of £35,000 could be generated by the end of March.

**RESOLVED: That the income and expenditure report is received (NC)**

74. To note the bank reconciliations for November and December 2016 as verified by the Chairman.

**RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliations for November and December 2016, as verified by the Chairman, are noted (NC)**

75. To receive the payment schedules for November and December 2016

The Committee members reviewed the Payment Schedules for November and December 2016.

**RESOLVED: That the Payment Schedules for November and December 2016 are received (NC)**

76. To consider and agree any communication messages arising from the meeting

To finalise the press release relating to the precept.

**RESOLVED: That the communication message as stated is approved (NC)**

The meeting concluded at 9.15pm.