

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT 8.20PM ON MONDAY 8<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017 AT THE CIVIC  
HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr C Gorst

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

91. Recording of meeting

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the meeting is recorded for the purposes of  
minute taking.

There were no other declarations of a recording of the meeting.

92. Questions from members of the public

None.

93. Apologies for absence

Cllr Mrs T Lorde and Mrs R Horsman-Johnson.

94. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

None.

95. Previous meeting minutes

The Clerk was asked for an update on the valuation of the Mayoral Chain. A  
quotation of £40.00 to value the Mayoral chain had been received. However,  
the jeweller had also confirmed that they had valued the chain only a few  
years ago so the Clerk will attempt to find the previous valuation.

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes  
Committee meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017 are approved as an accurate  
record (NC)**

96. Consider the quotes and information relating to challenging the non-domestic business rates 2015 onwards

The Deputy Clerk reported that she had spoken to the ratings consultant Richard Wackett to discuss progress in the case. The appeal was lodged on the 20<sup>th</sup> of December 2016. At Mr Wackett's request he was given a target date for discussion on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2017. He has spoken to the case officer at the Valuation Office and has explained that it is urgent and outlined the issue to him. The case officer, Luke Wilcox, said that he would take some advice on how halls were usually valued.

No further progress has been made. The programme period has now ended and at some point, the case will be listed for a tribunal hearing. This is likely to be a very lengthy process as the valuation office have a considerable backlog.

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

97. To receive and consider an update on the revision to the Town Council's Financial Regulations by the Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish group had reviewed the financial regulations and also considered how the Council could move to electronic banking in order to be more efficient. National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had updated the model regulations and the Task and Finish Group suggested amending the Town Council's regulations in line with the updated NALC regulations.

The Task and Finish Group had considered how best the Council could move towards electronic banking whilst retaining the need for two signatories. The Task and Finish Group had reviewed the products available from Royal Bank of Scotland for internet banking and had decided that Bankline Lite was the best option. A process for Councillors reviewing invoices and the Clerk making the payment had been discussed.

The costs of Bankline Lite were £20 per month and a further 40p for every faster payment made. There was no charge for direct debits.

The Committee agreed that they would wish to see the hard copy for each invoice as the current procedure. However, in an emergency the Clerk could email a copy of the invoice to all the signatories for approval.

The proposed electronic banking process would be sent to the internal auditor for approval.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council would move to electronic banking as set out above. The Task and Finish Group would review and approve the amendments to the Financial Regulations (NC)**

98. To receive and note the income and expenditure report for the financial year 2016/2017 for the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Town Council

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

99. To receive and consider the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and a written commentary from the Clerk regarding them

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk delivered the commentary for the Financial Statements for 2016/17.

The following variations for income and expenditure from the previous financial year were noted:

1. Removal of the Council Tax Benefit Support Grant
2. An increase in the income generated by the Civic Hall
3. The removal of the Cheshire East funding for the Information Service
4. An increase to staff costs as a result of one off restructuring costs
5. Business rates have doubled

Significant items of capital expenditure included the new server and the cost of replacing play equipment at Hockley Park. The majority of the cost of replacing the play equipment will be met by a WREN grant.

The general reserves remain roughly the same as last year. However, the amount in Earmarked Reserves will be increased by £44,038.

The asset list has been adjusted to include the wheelchairs, mobility scooters, minibus, allotments and the Inclines. The water bowser, three street lights and a metal bus shelter have been removed from the asset list.

It was proposed that the Financial Statements for 2016/17 are approved.

**RESOLVED: That the Financial Statements for 2016/17 are received (NC)**

100. To receive and consider the 'Retention of documents and records management policy'

At the interim audit the internal auditors had recommended that the Council adopt a document retention policy. The model policy sent by the auditors has been adapted to fit the Council's own requirements.

A Councillor noted that depending on the nature of the contract it may be appropriate to retain some contracts for a period longer than six years. Handwritten notes could be requested under the Freedom of Information Act and all handwritten notes should be destroyed following the meeting.

The following amendments were agreed:

1. Unsuccessful job applicant's records should be kept for a period of twelve months.
2. Successful applicant's records would be kept and included on their personnel file. The personnel records would be kept for a period of six years following the end of employment.
3. Insurance policies should be kept indefinitely
4. The register of interests for former members of the Town Council would be kept for a period of three years
5. Planning Applications would be kept for a period of one year but documents relating to matters of local interest would be kept for a period of three years
6. Newsletters should be kept indefinitely

**RESOLVED: That the 'Retention of documents and records management policy' subject to the proposed amendments is approved (NC)**

101. To consider approval of the payment to Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) of the Town Council's affiliation fee for 2017/2018 of £1,429.31

ChALC provide a legal, financial and employment advisory service. The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Council Members have used the service over the last year.

**RESOLVED: That the payment to ChALC is approved (7 for, 1 against)**

102. To note the appointment of the bank signatories

There are currently six bank signatories, Cllrs Mike Beanland, Laurence Clarke, Charles Gorst, Geoff King, Mrs Jo Sewart and Howard Murray. Any two of the signatories can sign the cheque.

**RESOLVED: That the appointment of the bank signatories is noted (NC)**

103. To note the bank reconciliations for January, February and March 2017 as verified by the Chairman

**RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliations for January, February and March 2017 as verified by the Chairman are noted (NC)**

104. Payment Schedules for March and April 2017

**RESOLVED: That the Payment Schedule for March 2017 is received and approved (NC)**

105. Consider and agree communication messages arising from this meeting

None.

Meeting end time: 9.30pm