

Minutes of the **FINANCE & HR COMMITTEE** meeting held in the Parish Office, Lower Green Road, Pembury on **Monday 21 November 2022** at 2:00pm.



Councillors Present:

Cllr N Stratton (Chair)
Cllr D Reilly

Cllr K Brooks (Vice-Chair)

Apologies:

There were none

Also in attendance:

Helen Munro (Clerk)

22/262. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** There were none.

22/263. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** There were none.

22/264. **MINUTES.** The minutes from the committee meeting held on 18 July 2022 were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

22/265. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.** There were none.

22/266. **CLERK'S REPORT.** The following report was **noted:**

- a. Pavilion Joint Management Agreement – The Football Club were still to review the agreement. Cllr Stratton to contact them in due course.
- b. Year End Accounts & Audit 2021/22 – the accounts had been returned and there were no except for items.
- c. Office Workload – workload remains high mainly due to the current events programme.
- d. Financial regulations – this is progressing.

22/267. **OPEN SESSION.** There were no members of the public present.

22/268. **AUDIT.**

- a. The Interim Internal Audit planned for 23 November had been cancelled due to unforeseen reasons. The Internal Auditor will be contacted to rearrange in due course either as an interim audit or rolled into the final audit.

- b. It was noted that Mazars had been appointed as the new External Auditor from April 2023.

22/269. **IT HARDWARE & SOFTWARE.**

- a. A report on tablets / laptops for councillor use was circulated and discussed in detail. Concerns were raised about use of personal devices for Council business which would need to be explored further. It was **RESOLVED** that 2x Samsung Galaxy A8 32gB tablets plus case and screen savers be purchased for a total of £300 for councillor use. A policy for computer equipment use by Councillors would be discussed at the next Committee meeting.
- b. Additional IT equipment for staff was discussed. It was agreed that staff could use one of the tablets purchased for Councillor use as per reference 22/269a. above. It was **RESOLVED** to add £200 to the IT budget for 2023/24 to purchase another tablet.
- c. Quotes for accounting packages to be considered for inclusion in the 2023/24 budget were received and discussed. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Rialtas Omega package be purchased and implemented from April 2023. This would be added to the draft budget for 2023/24.

22/270. **SAVINGS, INVESTMENTS & BANKING.** For recommendation to Full Council.

- a. A verbal report on fixed term investments and savings accounts was received. The benefits of investing with traditional banks or cash management platforms were discussed. Cllr Stratton agreed to research cash management platforms further for discussion at the next committee meeting.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend renewing approval for use of BACs, CHAPS and Faster payments subject to the controls current being in place.

22/271. **BUDGET, PRECEPT & BAND D EQUIVALENT 2023/24.** To consider the following for recommendation to Full Council:

- a. The Committee's wish lists were reviewed and prioritised.
- b. Staff budgets were considered. It was agreed that a 5% increase be included in the budget, but no guidance had been issued by the National Association of Local Councils or the Society of Local Council Clerks. Any actual increase implemented would be set nationally.

- c. Burial, allotment and sports pitch hire charges recommended by the Open Spaces Committee would be recommended to Full Council and included in the draft budget calculations.
- d. Newsletter advertising charges as recommended by the PVN Working Group would be recommended to Full Council and included in the draft budget calculations.
- e. The draft consolidated budget was reviewed, and changes discussed previously during the meeting made. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend a budget with expenditure of £311,490 and non-precept income of £63,986 to Full Council.
- f. Earmarked reserves were reviewed. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend combining the Legal Fee Reserve of £2,500 with the Planning Consultants Reserve of £1,900 to Full Council.
- g. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend a draft precept of £247,504 to Full Council. Using the previous year's tax base, the Band D equivalent would be £107.80. When the new tax base was notified, the Band D equivalent would be recalculated and taken into account when the final precept was agreed.

22/272. **FINANCIAL INFORMATION.** Reports to 30 September 2022 were reviewed. It was **RESOLVED** that they be recommended to Full Council:

- a. Budget monitoring report.
- b. Bank reconciliation and bank statements.
- c. Reserves.
- d. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the following vires for the 2022/23 budget:
 - Community Gardening £50 from Staff mileage
 - Councillors' tablets £300 from Grounds Maintenance Renewals.

22/273. **CIVILITY & RESPECT.**

- a. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend taking the NALC/SLCC Civility and Respect pledge to Full Council for approval.
- b. The NALC/SLCC Model Councillor-Officer Protocol was circulated. This would be reviewed and added to a future agenda for discussion. A request to include equal access to certain information on a confidential basis would also be considered.

- 22/274. **RISKS.**
- a. Use of Councillors own IT devices was raised. A Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) Policy and IT Policy would be considered at a future meeting. Cllr Stratton to review policies of other councils and bring a recommendation to the next Committee meeting.
 - b. Risk assessments for the Fireworks, Remembrance Day and Christmas Carols on the Green were noted.
 - c. The updated strategic risk register was reviewed, and it was agreed to add an item about the risk of BYOD and cyber-attacks.
- 22/275. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS OR AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.** A request to add replacement streetlighting and funding them through loans to be added to the next Finance & HR Committee agenda.
- 22/276. **NEXT MEETING DATE.** 30 January 2023 at 2pm.
- 22/277. *Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, the public and press were excluded from the meeting for the next item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information.at 16:12.*
- 22/278. **SALARY INCREASES 2022/23.**
- a. Updated national pay spine amounts and backdated payments to relevant staff were noted.
 - b. Hourly rates of pay for other staff were noted.
 - c. The nationally agreed increase of one additional day's holiday for all staff from 1 April 2023 onwards was noted.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 16:15

Signed: _____ Date: _____
 Chair