

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Finance, Policy and Governance Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 10th May 2018 at 7.30pm at the Sandbach Literary Institution, Hightown.

In Attendance:

- Cllr Gill Merry
- Cllr Martin Forster
- Cllr Richard Hovey
- Cllr Mike Muldoon
- Cllr Alan Smith
- Cllr Steve Kirkham
- Cllr Sam Corcoran (arrived 8.13pm)

Also present were 2 members of the public and press.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from:

- Cllr B Moran
- Cllr C Lowe
- Cllr M Benson

No Apologies received from Cllr S Ashcombe-Hurt

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any item on the agenda, none were declared.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow questions from members of the public, there being no questions, the Chairman reconvened the Meeting.

3 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 18TH MARCH 2018.

RESOLVED: that the minutes be approved as an accurate record.

4 FINANCIAL STATEMENT – FINAL QUARTER 2017-2018

[Attached: Simplified Accounts Summary, Detailed Income and Expenditure Cost Centre Report, Bank Reconciliation and Variance Report]

Lead: Chairman of Finance and RFO

The final quarter statements were presented, it was highlighted that the figures were still subject to change due to year end procedures and closedown. The final figures will be presented to Full Council on 31st May 2018. Also noted was an amendment was required to the Simplified Accounts Summary, the total of the year to date should read -£91,699, all other figures are correct.

RESOLVED: That the Financial statements be noted.

5 PAYMENTS MADE

[Attached: Schedule of Payments]

Lead: Chairman of Finance and RFO

RESOLVED: That the payments made between 1st January and 31st March 2018 be approved.

6 APPLICATIONS FOR DONATIONS

Lead: Chair of Finance

6.1 SANDBACH GYMNASTICS FOUNDATION

They applied for a grant of £1,000 towards new equipment to fit out a new venue.

RESOLVED: That the grant of £1,000 be awarded.

6.2 ACT IT OUT

They applied for a grant of £875 towards the costs of running Letters of War workshops in local Primary Schools. It was noted that it has not be identified which schools have been secured to receive the workshops.

RESOLVED: That the award be granted conditionally. £875 to be awarded only if 3 schools can be secured.

7 SUPPLIER INVOICE PAYMENT APPROVAL

7.1 PT & RL BOULLEN PROPERTIES

Invoice 1881 was presented, which relates to rent on a storage unit.

RESOLVED: That invoice 1881, for £2,000 (plus £400 VAT) is approved and is to be paid from budget code 4200/101.

7.2 SLI TRUSTEES

Invoice 10 was presented, which relates to Utility costs for the period 2017-2018.

RESOLVED: That invoice 10 is approved, but only paid on receipt of copies of the original bills issued to SLI be provided for proof of the period the invoice relates to. Once provided the £2,434.56 (plus £117.47 VAT), to be paid from budget code 4142/101.

8 INTERNAL AUDIT

Lead: RFO

The updated Second Interim Internal Audit Report for 2017-18 was discussed.

The RFO spoke in relation to points 2 and 3.

She explained that the matter regarding working groups making decisions has been resolved, however as the potential for working groups to make decisions existed during the year 2017/18 that it would need to be referenced on the 2017/18 Annual Return.

She advised that there remains a VAT liability based on the Independent VAT report undertaken by the Parkinson Partnership. There are two areas of service provision which may be subject to tax, these are being referred to the Assets and Services Committee for direction, following which final decision will be sought from HMRC.

RESOLVED: that the Second Internal Audit Report be received.

9 ANNUAL RETURN 2017-2018

Lead: RFO

The Finance Officer presented the new style Annual Return and timetable for approvals.

The RFO explained that due to the timing of the Internal Audit, there had not been time to complete and share the Annual Return with members; the Finance Officer agreed to circulate the figure. The completed Annual Return will be presented to Council on 31 May for approval.

From a financial perspective, there are no issues. The Finance Officer was thanked for her work in achieving this position.

From a Governance perspective there are three matters which will be raised in the final Internal Audit report:

Working Groups Making Decisions – as stated above under item 8.

Risk Assessment – this has been done but has not been presented to Council by the year end; it is due to be presented for approval on 31 May 2018.

VAT Liability – as stated above under item 8.

RESOLVED: that the Officers Reports are noted.

10 PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Lead: RFO

Following an enquiry from a member of the public, the RFO was asked to review the Financial Regulations to ensure that they were up to date and covered all relevant aspects of procurement.

The RFO has reviewed the content of the letter and researched the gov.uk website. She concluded that it would be impossible to list all EU and UK regulations within Financial Regulations and ensure that as regulations are updated, so are the Financial Regulations. She suggested the insertion of a single sentence under FR11.1k:

The European Union Procurement Directives and UK Regulations shall apply, which include Public Contracts Regulations, Transparency Regulation and the Utilities Contract Regulations, including thresholds to be followed. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk

RESOLVED: that the proposed amendment to Financial Regulations is recommended to Council.

n.b. the person who initially raised the matter was present at the meeting and confirmed that he was happy with the approach, and that at all times when dealing with larger contracts Council should ensure the opportunities are fair and open to all.

11 AGED DEBT POLICY

Lead: Chair of Finance

The Draft Policy was with the recommendation that this policy be presented to Council that the Policy and Procedure be adopted and implemented with immediate effect. There were two amendments:

- i) In the charges section: correct the wording to 'Bank of England Interest Rate'
- ii) In the Conduct section: remove the line 'The Council will not act in a manner to embarrass the debtor.'
- iii) In the notes section: remove the line 'It shall be the duty of the Finance Policy and Governance committee to review this policy annually'. It was noted that if any changes are required it is normal procedure to present again for approval.

RESOLVED: That the Policy and Procedure be recommended to Council for adoption and immediate implementation, with the above amendments.

12 CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT

Lead: RFO

The Clerk presented the updated Risk Management schedules and reported that they will be presented to Council for approval on 31 May 2018.

RESOLVED: that the Risk Management Schedules are recommended to Council for approval.

13 INTERNAL AUDITOR AND DATA PROTECTION OFFICER

Lead: Town Clerk/RFO

The Town Clerk/RFO spoke to her report that had been circulated with the agenda and addressed two matters:

Internal Auditor – At the request of the Finance Committee a review of Internal Audit provision had been undertaken. ChALC had been asked to supply details of auditors used by other Councils and these had been approached for quotation, along with JDH, the Council's current Internal Auditor. The Town Clerk/RFO recommendation is that JDH continues to provide internal audit services to Sandbach Town Council.

GDPR – Data Protection Officer (DPO) – Implementation of GDPR takes place on 25 May at which time the ICO expects T&PC to have made good progress towards the appoint of their DPO.

NALC has said, that in most cases it not appropriate for the Clerk to be DPO due to a potential conflict of interest – this view is supported by ChALC and the ICO.

We have now been made aware of a proposed amendment to the GDPR bill, which seeks to exclude T&PC from having to appoint a DPO – the outcome of this amendment is yet to be resolved.

In the meantime, there is a great deal of work to be done to ensure that we comply with the requirements of GDPR.

JDH has offered to act as DPO and has provided a quotation for services, the Clerk felt that this would be an excellent way of managing change and ensuring compliance and asked that members support such an appointment for one year, following which the position should be reviewed. As there is no budgetary provision for such an appointment, the matter will need to be referred to Council for approval.

RESOLVED: that

JDH Business Services continues to provide internal audit services to STC, by recommendation to the AGM on 17 May 2018 (quotation dated April 2018 for 2018/19 of £990 +VAT)

JDH Business Services are appointed DPO to the Council, by recommendation to Council. (quotation undated (2017) for 2018/19 of £1,500 + VAT). This recommendation is subject to change should the amendment to the bill be passed before resolution by Council.

14 GRANT FEEDBACK FORM

There were none.

15 LETTERS OF THANKS

15.1 GIRLGUIDING CHESHIRE BORDER

Lead: Chair of Finance

RESOLVED: That the thank you letter be received.

16 CORRESPONDENCE

There was none.

17 ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Members were invited forward any items they wished to be included on the next agenda.

18 UNDISCHARGED RESOLUTIONS

Lead: Chair of Finance

The undisclosed resolution was presented regarding the Town Hall Financial Report summary, and noted that this will be available at the next Finance Meeting in August.

19 DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee will be held on Thursday, 2nd August 2018 at **7.30pm** at the Sandbach Literary Institution, Hightown.

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