

MEETING of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on:	Tuesday, 23 July 2024 at 6.15pm. Room 6, Crispin Community Centre, Leigh Road, Street, BA16 0HA.
Members Summoned and Present:	Members summoned and present: Cllrs: Peter Goater (Committee Chairman), Simon Carswell, Neil Howiantz, Nick Kellett (Vice-Chairman) - arrived 6.25pm, Terry Napper, Nicola Smith, and Laura Wolfers.
Apologies:	Cllrs Pam Birch and Bryan Knickerbocker
Officers Present:	Zoe Leach, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)
In attendance:	Members of the public (0).

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public in attendance. The Policy and Finance Committee meeting commenced at 6.15pm.

MINUTES

- 24/25P&F.013 Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bryan Knickerbocker and Pam Birch. Apologies were noted. *LGA 1972 s85(1)*.
- 24/25P&F.014 Declarations of Interests and Grant of Dispensations
Councillors were reminded to make any Declarations of Interest, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Parish Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, SI No. 1464.
- Declarations of interest were made by:*
- Cllr Goater – Houndwood Community Group (Chair)*
- 24/25P&F.015 Confirmation of minutes
RESOLVED - the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee held on 4 June 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
(LGA 1972, Schedule 12, paragraph 41(1)).

24/25P&F.016 Reports

The Clerk gave a verbal report on matters relating to the Policy and Finance Committee and updates/actions on behalf of the office. This included:

- Green Door families – confirmation of receipt of returned unspent grant award of £8,000
- Outstanding tasks: Review of banking options and re-evaluations of identified assets.

24/25P&F.017 Risk Registers

Members reviewed the Risk Registers for the Parish Rooms and Library, Skate Park, Merriman Park and Strode Road Allotments.

- i. RESOLVED – that the six monthly review dates for all Risk Registers are aligned – due by February and August.
- ii. RESOLVED - that no revisions are required to the Risk Registers for the Parish Rooms and Library, Skate Park, Merriman Park and Strode Road Allotments at the present time.

24/25P&F.018 Policies

i. Annual Investment Strategy:

The Committee reviewed the Annual Investment Strategy and considered the levels of funds held in the Council's Natwest Bank accounts and the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund account. The RFO recommended that professional local authority sector advice be sought prior to transferring any further funds into the CCLA account.

- a) RESOLVED that the maximum balance of funds invested in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund is increased from £500,000 to £1,000,000.00 - the additional funds to be transferred from the Natwest Savings account at the earliest opportunity.
- b) RESOLVED that professional local authority sector advice is sought regarding levels of funds invested in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.
- c) RESOLVED that the maximum balance held in the Nat West Current Account is increased to £74,999.99.

ii. Communications Policy:

RESOLVED to approve the Communications Policy subject to the following revisions:

- Addition of: '6.5 Council Communication should not contain any party political content.'
- Remove the reference to 'District' Council at 8.2.
- Amend the review date to May 2025 Annual Meeting of Council which is in line with the Council's adopted Standing Orders.

iii. Model Policies:

a) Complaints Procedure

RESOLVED: To adopt the Complaints Procedure to be reviewed annually at the May Annual Meeting of Council.

A common sense approach to the triaging of complaints to be applied. Officers to investigate any training needs in dealing with complaints.

b) Data Protection Policy

RESOLVED: To adopt the Data Protection Policy to be reviewed annually at the May Annual Meeting of Council

c) Privacy Notice

RESOLVED: To adopt the Privacy Notice to be reviewed annually at the May Annual Meeting of Council

24/25P&F.019 Capital Expenditure

- i. RESOLVED - that a reconditioned mobile phone is purchased at a cost of up to £150 for the Clerk's business use to replace the current mobile phone which is in need of replacement/repair.
- ii. RESOLVED – that a reconditioned mobile phone is purchased at a cost of up to £150 for the Community Engagement/Assistant Clerk for the use at Parish Council community events and for social media.
- iii. RESOLVED – that the Committee give delegated power to the Responsible Financial Officer to secure best value mobile phone contracts.

24/25P&F.020 Energy Contract

The Committee considered the energy price comparisons provided by an Energy Savings Agent at Bionic. OPUS currently provides the electric for the High Street Clock and the Gas and Electric for the Parish Rooms. The Committee noted that OPUS has sold its customer portfolio to EDF and the Council's energy contract will be transferred with effect from September 2024. Terms and conditions and contract end dates to remain the same.

High Street Clock	Electric	contract expiry: 16.09.2024
Parish Rooms	Electric	contract expiry: 30.11.2024
Parish Rooms	Gas	contract expiry: 29.11.2024

RESOLVED – that the RFO secures the rates offered through Bionic for a 24 month fixed price deal with EDF at the expiration of the current contract.

24/25P&F.021 Internal Auditor Appointment 2025/26

The Committee considered the Internal Audit 2025/26 quotations from Fair Account, Parish and Town Auditing Services (PATAS) and Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd. The Deputy Clerk/RFO provided a summary of the feedback received.

RESOLVED to instruct Parish and Town Auditing Services to undertake the Internal Audit for 2025/26 to include an interim and year end audit at a price of £650.00. The Committee to review requirements for 2026/27 following the 2025/26 audit process

24/25P&F.022 Chairs Allowance

The Committee considered whether the Chairs allowance should be paid directly to the Chair of Council in quarterly instalments through the Council payroll provider. The Committee discussed potential financial barriers to becoming the Chair of Council alongside the Council's needs for transparency.

RESOLVED:

- i. that the current process continues: Chair of Council agrees expenditure with the Responsible Financial Officer from the Chairmans allowance agreed by Full Council during the annual budget setting process.
- ii. the Responsible Financial Officer to investigate the possibility of a Chair's expense account.

24/25P&F.023 Periodic Reports and Inspections

The Policy and Finance Committee noted the report from the Responsible Financial Officer on reports and inspections to include reconciliation of latest bank statements, monthly inspections of accounts and payments, and staff mileage and hours.

Initial:

24/25P&F.024 Income and Expenditure

Members received a report from the Responsible Finance Officer on Receipts and Payments for the period April 2024 – June 2024 and considered variations.

24/25P&F.025 Grants Awards

- i. The Policy & Finance Committee noted the grant reports received from organisations in receipt of grant funding.
- ii. RESOLVED to defer the grant applications received from the Anglican Parish of Street and Houndwood Community Group to the next Committee meeting when all grant applications received will be considered.
- iii. Cllr Champion Howiantz provided a verbal report on Somerset Mind Street Youth Matters peer support group project. The group is well attended, although not at full capacity. Early staffing difficulties were a block to the start up but appear to have been remedied. *Councillor Champions to arrange a visit and request regular reports.*
- iv. Cllr Howiantz and Kellett provided a verbal report on behalf of the YMCA Youth Outreach Champions. Street and Glastonbury youth work teams have joined together to ensure there are enough staff to run every session. The large majority of the most vulnerable young people who usually attend Street have continued to access sessions each week across venues. The Youth Work Team Leader is working on safeguarding and in-school provision and continues to build relationships with Strode College, Crispin School and local primary schools. The champions reported an uplifting experience upon visiting the Youth Club in June.

24/25P&F.026 Community Payback Scheme

RESOLVED that the Council Reform Budget is used to purchase any sundry items required by the Community Payback team up to a maximum of £3000. Officers to manage.

24/25P&F.027 Confidential Item

RESOLVED - In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 amended by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, the Policy & Finance Committee excluded the press and public as it involves confidential information relating to staffing matters.

24/25P&F.028 Flexible Working Policy

RESOLVED –to approve the Flexible Working Policy recommended by the Staffing Committee.

24/25P&F.029 Information to raise for consideration at the next meeting

Scheduled items:

Grant Application Consideration

Policy reviews:

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Accessibility Statement

Freedom of Information. Publication Scheme

Livestreaming and remote attendance review – report from task and finish group and Clerk.

Proposal for purchase of card reader for library card payments.

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday, 23 July 2024

24/25P&F.30 Date of Next Meeting

An Ordinary Meeting will take place at 6.15pm on Tuesday 27th August in Room 6 Crispin Community Centre, Street.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8.10pm.

These minutes were adopted on 27 August 2024 under minute reference 24/25 P&F.015 as a true record of the decisions taken and are duly signed below by the chair of that meeting.

Signed: _____

Initial: