MINUTES of the **FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** meeting held online on **Wednesday 24 March 2021** at **7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr M Richardson (Chairman)   Cllr S Harkin
               Cllr S Bennett   Cllr A Smith

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)
               Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)
               Mr S Congi (Finance Admin Assistant)

543. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none.

544. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr T Green, Cllr S Bird, Cllr M Deacon, Cllr S Wiles** due to a clash of dates with a meeting at East Suffolk Council and **Cllr K Williams**, due to other business.

545. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

546. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2021 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

547. BUDGET MONITORING TO 28 FEBRUARY 2021

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 28 February 2021. A report of any variance to budget estimates for the period greater than 10% or £500 was considered.

It was RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report to 28 February 2021 be approved, with no other action required at this time.

548. COMMUNITY INFRASTURUCTURE LEVY (CIL) WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Committee considered the report on CIL and ideas that had been received recently. It was agreed that the Working Group should arrange to meet again once further ideas had been received following on from the recent delivery of the magazine which has requested feedback. The Deputy Town Clerk would also liaise with local community groups for further ideas.

The Clerk explained to Committee that on some of the new larger developments it was likely that Section 106 funding would be negotiated by the planning authority, instead of CIL. Whilst such funding would be used within the community, this would not come under the remit of the CIL working group.

It was RESOLVED that :

i) **the report on CIL be noted as received; and,**

ii) **a CIL Working Group meeting be arranged for mid/late April to discuss further ideas received.**

549. ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE UPGRADES

Committee considered the report on accounting software and considered upgrading to a new accountancy and cemetery package.

Members noted that the reporting would look slightly different but would include similar output information. Members thanked officers for their hard work in researching the product fully before bringing the report to Committee. Committee agreed it would be prudent to move to a cloud-based package in order to relinquish reliance on a physical server and virtual private network (VPN) link.

It was RESOLVED that :

i. **the new Scribe Accounting Software be purchased with the set-up fee met from Committee's delegated authority from Council to commit expenditure from the IT Earmarked Reserve as part of the Council's digital enhancement; and,**

ii. **the annual licence fee to come from the 2021/22 budget for IT maintenance and software; and,**

iii. **the Scribe Cemetery package be considered when the existing contract with Clearskies ends and costs met as above.**

550. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) POLICY 2020-21)

Committee considered the draft Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy 2020-21. It was suggested that a link to NALC's Cyber security guidelines and a glossary of terms be included. Members also felt it would be useful to have a bit more information on what Council is doing to ensure security, such as Bitdefender Endpoint Security which is installed to Council's laptops.

It was RESOLVED that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Policy 2020-21 be recommended to Annual Council meeting for adoption with amendments as discussed.

551. <u>TERMS OF REFERENCE 2021/22</u>

Committee reviewed the Terms of Reference for Council and its Committees for 2021/22.

Members discussed the possibility of including further delegation to Committees and giving authority to spend against specified Earmarked Reserves, up to a predetermined limit, without requiring further approval from Council. It was agreed that this would be welcomed and improve efficiency of Committee business. The Clerk advised that he would consult with SALC over the validity of a general delegation to Committees for expenditure against Earmarked Reserves.

It was RESOLVED that, subject to the inclusion of a further delegation to Committees giving authority to spend against specified Earmarked Reserves, up to a predetermined limit, without requiring further approval from Council, the Terms of Reference for 2021/22 be recommended to the Annual Council meeting for adoption as presented.

552. <u>STANDING ORDERS 2021/22</u>

Committee considered Standing Orders for 2021/22, and agreed the amendment to 3(g) to permit up to 3 minutes speaking by members of the public during the public session. It was noted that current rules permit up to 1 minute, however, 3 minutes is commonly given in practice. The amendment would therefore reconcile this variation between policy and practice.

It was RESOLVED that Standing Orders for 2021/22 be recommended to Annual Council meeting for adoption as presented.

553. <u>FINANCIAL REGULATIONS 2021/22</u>

Committee reviewed its Financial Regulations for 2021/22. In accordance with Regulation 6.8, Committee reviewed the continued use of BACS.

It was RESOLVED that

i.   the Financial Regulations for 2021/22 be recommended to the Annual Council meeting for adoption as presented; and,

ii.   the continued use of BACS also be recommended to Council.

554. <u>RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY & FINANCIAL RISK REGISTER</u>

Committee considered Council's Risk Management Policy and Financial Risk Register for 2021/22 and noted that the Clerk will bring a report on the effectiveness of internal audit to Committee in May for a recommendation to Council in June.

It was RESOLVED that the Risk Management Policy be recommended to the Annual Council meeting for adoption.

555. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE 2021/22

Committee reviewed the Council's Complaints Procedure for 2021/22.

It was RESOLVED that Council's Complaints Procedure be recommended to Annual Council for re-adoption in 2019/20 with no changes.

556. PUBLICATION SCHEME 2021/22

Committee reviewed the Publication Scheme based on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) model publication scheme, and the schedule of information available from Felixstowe Town Council.

RESOLVED that the ICO model publication scheme be recommended to Annual Council for re-adoption.

557. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 8.39 pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 26 May 2021 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____   Chairman: _____