

MINUTES of the FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held at Town Hall, Felixstowe on Wednesday 8 June 2022 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Cllr M Richardson (Chairman) Cllr M Deacon
Cllr T Green (Vice Chairman) Cllr A Smith
Cllr N Barber Cllr S Wiles
Cllr S Bird

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjirishi (Town Clerk)
Mr S Congi (Financial Administration Assistant)

IN ATTENDANCE: One member of the public (*via Zoom*)

37. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were none.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr S Bennett** and **Cllr K Williams**.

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr S Bird Cllr M Deacon Cllr M Richardson Cllr S Wiles	All	Local Non-Pecuniary (as Members of East Suffolk Council)
Cllr S Bird Cllr S Wiles	All	Local Non-Pecuniary (as a Members of Suffolk County Council)

As no Pecuniary declarations were made, there were no requests for dispensation.

40. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee Meeting held on 23 March 2022 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

41. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT: FULL YEAR 2021/22

Members considered the final Internal Audit Report for the year 1 April – 31 March 2022 as presented.

RESOLVED that Committee noted that there were no significant actions arising from the final Internal Audit Report for the Financial Year 2021/22 and, therefore, no action plan is required to be submitted with the Annual Return 2021/22 to the External Auditor.

42. REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT EFFECTIVENESS

Committee reviewed the arrangements for, and effectiveness of, Council's internal audit.

Members considered the good service received from the SALC-appointed auditor and the benefit of an internal auditor with experience of working within the town council sector. It was proposed that the arrangement be recommended to continue on the same basis for 2022/23.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that:

- i. having reviewed the effectiveness of its internal audit, it be resolved that Council considers the arrangements to be effective; and,**
- ii. in being satisfied of the independence and competence of its internal auditor, Mr Colin Poole of the Suffolk Association of Local Councils be appointed to continue as the Council's internal auditor, undertaking a half-yearly and year-end audit on the basis of paras 4.14-4.17 of the "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2019".**

43. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ANNUAL RETURN 2021-22

Members considered the Accounts, Annual Governance Statement and Annual Return for the Financial Year 2021/22 as presented. Council recorded a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, and the Finance Administration Assistant for their hard work in preparing the accounts. The Clerk advised that the Notice of Audit would be displayed on the Town Hall noticeboard in accordance with the statutory requirements.

It was RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that:

- i. the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2022 (Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement) be approved and the Mayor and Town Clerk be authorised to sign the declaration on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council;**
- ii. the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2022 (Section 2 – Accounting Statements) as signed by the Town Clerk, as the Council's Responsible Finance Officer be approved, and the Mayor be authorised to sign the declaration on behalf of Felixstowe Town Council; and,**
- iii. it be noted that there were no actions arising from the final Internal Audit Report for the Financial Year 2021/22 and, therefore, no action plan was required to be submitted with the Annual Return 2021/22 to the External Auditor.**

44. BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 MAY 2022

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 31 May 2022. A report of any variance to budget estimates for the period greater than 10% or £500 was considered.

Members noted and were concerned by the cost of electricity at Walton Community Hall, with almost half the annual budgeted expenditure having already been incurred. Members agreed that the Council's Assets & Services Committee should consider all the options which may be available to Council to address the cost of energy consumption at Walton Community Hall.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the budget monitoring report to 31 May 2022 be noted; and,**
- ii. Council's Assets & Services Committee be requested to consider how best to address the increasing cost of energy consumption at Walton Community Hall.**

45. QUARTERLY BANK RECONCILIATION

It was confirmed that Cllr D Savage, as the Council's nominated Quarterly Bank Reconciliation Signatory (*Min #13 2022/23 refers*), had signed the reconciliation between the bank statement and Scribe accounts to confirm the amounts agreed each month.

RESOLVED that it be noted that the reconciliations between the bank statement and accounts statements for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 had been reviewed and signed by Cllr D Savage.

46. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL 2022/23

Committee noted the requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 for Council to ensure that it has a sound system of internal control.

Following consideration of the Council's policy and internal control statement document it was proposed that it be recommended to Council for approval and adoption with no further changes.

It was RESOLVED that the Internal Control Statement for the year ending 31 March 2023 be recommended to Council for formal adoption as presented.

47. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 8.18pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 13 July 2022 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____