

FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE

SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Town Hall, Saffron Walden on Monday 20th May 2024 at 7.30pm

Present Councillors: Abercrombie, Curtis (as a substitute for Cllr McBirnie), de Vries (Chair), Eke and Gadd.

Officers: Lisa Courtney, Town Clerk
David Broomfield, Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

Public: Representative of Elmo Miniatures

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| <p>F&E 062-24</p> | <p>Election of Committee Chair</p> <p>Cllr Eke nominated Cllr de Vries, this was seconded by Cllr Gadd. No other nominations were received.</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to appoint Cllr de Vries as the Committee Chair for 2024/25.</p> |
| <p>F&E 063-24</p> | <p>Election of Deputy Committee Chair</p> <p>Cllr Eke nominated Cllr Abercrombie, this was seconded by Cllr Curtis. No other nominations were received.</p> <p>It was unanimously resolved to appoint Cllr Abercrombie as the Deputy Committee Chair for 2024/25.</p> |
| <p>F&E 064-24</p> | <p>Apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Ahmed, McBirnie, Meloy, Reeve and Shotropa.</p> |
| <p>F&E 065-24</p> | <p>To receive any Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Cllr Gadd declared a generic non-pecuniary interest as County Councillor of Essex County Council.</p> |
| <p>F&E 066-24</p> | <p>Public Speaking Time</p> <p>There were no questions arising.</p> |
| <p>F&E 067-24</p> | <p>It was agreed to bring forward agenda item 14, Grant Monitoring Form from Elmo Miniatures.</p> |

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| F&E 068-24 | <p>Grant Monitoring Form from Elmo Miniatures</p> <p>A representative of Elmo Miniatures thanked Committee for the free of charge hire of Golden Acre for the recent fundraising event which raised £1,000 for charity. He noted the positive community impact of the activities he hosts, including dealing with social isolation and encouraging social skills.</p> |
| F&E 069-24 | <p>Minutes of the Finance & Establishment Committee 22.04.2024</p> <p>The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of that meeting and were signed by the Chairman.</p> |
| Financial Matters | |
| F&E 070-24 | <p>Expenditure – to be authorised</p> <p>(a) Payment of the accounts received since 22.04.2024 were approved. (b) Payment of accounts for payments already made since 22.04.2024 were approved.</p> |
| F&E 071-24 | <p>Tourist Information Centre</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the profit and loss account for April 2024.</p> <p>It was noted that subsequent to the budget being issued, the staffing element for the TIC had changed, reflecting staffing reductions.</p> <p>Committee requested the revised TIC budget and staffing costs are reflected in the budget. Officers explained the budget must remain as adopted at the January 2024 Full Council but a revised Profit and Loss can be prepared with an additional column detailing revised staffing costs and these figures will be recognised in the June reports.</p> |
| F&E 072-24 | <p>Monthly Reports</p> <p>Committee received and noted the following monthly reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Bank reconciliation statement with supporting statements (b) Cash Book – showing all income and expenditure for April 2024 (c) Income report broken down by budget code – year to date including comparison of income year to date against previous years. <p>Discussion was had surrounding the Debt Management Office Investments and the amount held in the 30-day account. The RFO noted the balance in the 30-day account (which pays interest) is based upon cash-flow forecasts, ensuring sufficient monies are held to meet immediate commitments/payments. The RFO noted he felt uncomfortable in reducing monies held in the 30-day account given the sums are calculated with balances remaining to allow for emergency access to monies.</p> <p>Committee respected the RFO's concerns, it was Resolved:</p> |

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| | To review the Investment Policy at the June or July F & E meeting (pending a meeting with the Investment Manager at UDC), which should be amended to reflect any financial limitations/requirements on balances held in the 30-day account. |
| F&E 073-24 | <p>Committee Hi-Light Reports</p> <p>The Committee received and noted the Hi-Lighted reports from the RFO. There were no specific items to note or action to be taken in relation to documents 8(a) or 8(b).</p> |
| F&E 074-24 | <p>Ear Marked Reserves</p> <p>It was noted the EMR, and schedule of works will be presented to both a future F & E Meeting and the Budget working group meeting (when it meets), along with details of projected cash flow forecasts.</p> |
| F&E 075-24 | <p>Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023-24 (Annual Return)</p> <p>Committee noted:</p> <p>(a) The internal auditor has signed off the Annual Internal Audit Report and has approved the accounts and practices. An anomaly was noted in the internal auditor's report, namely the annual expenditure figure appeared to be incorrect.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note: the internal auditor had erroneously retained the 6-monthly figure in the report, rather than the year end figure.</i></p> <p>(b) Annual Governance Statement 2023-24 with detailed explanations</p> <p>(c) The following supporting documents for reconciliation and verification of the annual return for year ended 31st March 2024, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variances explanation • Reconciliation document • Working details for annual return • Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts • Balance sheet • Bank reconciliation pro-forma <p>(d) Asset Register</p> <p>(e) Dates for the period of exercise of public rights, with the following proposed dates: Commencing on Monday 17th June ending Friday 26th July 2024.</p> <p>(f) Section1 being the Annual Governance Statement regarding the authorisation (or otherwise) of these statements.</p> <p>It was Resolved:</p> <p>Subject to the following, it was agreed to recommend adoption of the AGAR to the June Full Council meeting:</p> |

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| | <p>(i) That the expenditure figure as noted in (a) above should be reconciled;</p> <p>(ii) A recognition that Standing Order 19b was purposefully not met in concluding the Town Clerk's appraisal given there were two (as opposed to the three stated in SO 19b) Councillors present in concluding the appraisal. Cllr Eke noted that in a future review of Standing Orders, it was likely this paragraph would be recommended for revision to reduce the number of Councillors from three to two.</p> |
| F&E 076-24 | <p>Precept Tranche</p> <p>It was noted the first tranche of precept of £684,919.00 for 2024/25 has been received.</p> |
| | <p>Grant Monitoring Forms</p> |
| F&E 077-24 | <p>(a) Elmo Miniatures – Monitoring Form</p> <p>Committee noted the monitoring form, concluding this grant application.</p> <p>(b) Hope Community Association – Monitoring Form</p> <p>Committee noted the monitoring form, concluding this grant application.</p> |
| F&E 078-24 | <p>Uttlesford Community Travel – Grant Funding</p> <p>Committee noted the application form.</p> <p>It was Resolved:</p> <p>To approve the application.</p> |
| | <p>Establishment Matters</p> |
| F&E 079-24 | <p>Scheme of Delegation Policy</p> <p>Committee considered the proposed amendments to the scheme of delegation policy.</p> <p>It was Resolved:</p> <p>To adopt the policy with the proposed changes.</p> |
| F&E 080-24 | <p>Urgent Information Items</p> <p>There were no matters raised.</p> |
| F&E 081-24 | <p>Date and time of Next Meeting</p> <p>17 June 2024 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall Saffron Walden</p> |
| F&E 082-24 | <p>Confidential Item – Exclusion of Press and Public (Part II meeting)</p> |

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| | <p>It was Resolved: that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>This is confidential to comply with Data Protection Regulations.</p> |
| <p>F&E 083-24</p> | <p>Town Clerk's Appraisal</p> <p>The Town Mayor provided a verbal update on the Town Clerk's appraisal which was conducted by the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor in March 2024. The Town Mayor focused on the objectives as prescribed for the Town Clerk; details were noted.</p> |

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm