



Minutes of Finance and Policy Committee held in the Bridgwater Room on Monday 20 November 2023 at 09:30.

Present:

Councillors: Brian Smedley, Jacqui Solomon, Kathy Pearce and Tim Mander

Officers: David Mears – Town Clerk, Lorna Williams – Democratic Services Officer and Fiona Tuck – Finance Officer

FEC2023/49 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN

Apologies were received from Councillors, Lerry and Marsh who were unwell and Hubble who had work commitments.

Cllr. Dave Loveridge was not present.

FEC2023/50 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS - Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)

There were no declarations given

FEC2023/51 MINUTES To approve and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Finance and Policy Executive Committee Meeting held on Thursday 18 September 2023 (LGA 1972 sch 12, para 41(1))

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2023 be signed as a correct record.

FEC2023/52 TO NOTE THE ACTION LIST

Noted



FEC2023/53 **FINANCE** Accounts for Payment and Income – to note items of expenditure as approved under delegated authority or under previous Council/Committee decisions and income received for October 2023

RESOLVED – payments and income noted

FEC2023/54 **FINANCE** To receive the year to date budget as of 31 October 2023 and for the Town Clerk to give direction of travel on the 2024/25 budget

RESOLVED – Year to date budget was noted

FEC2023/55 **TO RECEIVE VAT ADVICE, REPORT FROM THE PARKINSON PARTNERSHIP LLP**

FEC2023/55.1 **THE TOWN COUNCIL NEEDS TO REGISTER FOR VAT** and to approve to make an application for the 'Option to Tax' the Town Hall and connected buildings.

The Clerk explained the reasons for instigating the report and the implications if the council doesn't register for VAT and Option to Tax

RESOLVED – that Bridgwater Town Council would become VAT registered and an application for the 'Option to Tax' the Town Hall should be made.

FEC2023/55.2 **TO APPROVE TO MAKE AN APPLICATION FOR THE 'OPTION TO TAX' THE ARTS CENTRE**

RESOLVED – that an application for the 'Option to Tax' the Arts Centre should be made.

FEC2023/56 **TO GIVE AUTHORISATION TO THE TOWN CLERK** to proceed with the leasing of vehicles and purchase of equipment for Parks and Open Spaces

The Clerk sought agreement for each item required and explained that these were required for the Town Council to take on Parks and Open Spaces under Devolution in April.

RESOLVED – to give authority to the Clerk to proceed with the leasing of vehicles and the purchase of equipment.



FEC2023/57 TO RECEIVE THE LETTER FROM CLLR. BILL REVANS, LEADER OF SOMERSET COUNCIL, CONCERNING SOMERSET COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION. and to give guidance to the Town Clerk

The Clerk presented a Powerpoint to the meeting providing an overview of the financial situation of Somerset Council and Bridgwater Town Council's, including Somersets largest precepts, largest Tax Base for receipts and an average Band D property.

RESOLVED – the letter was noted along with the list of services and assets on offer to be devolved to Towns and parishes.

FEC2023/58 TO APPROVE EXTERNAL HR SUPPORT FOR THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – to approve to use the firm Council HR and Governance Support

FEC2023/59 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENTS FOR CORE GRANTS AND GENERAL GRANTS

Cllr Pearce suggested that the name of the document should be changed to 'Funding Agreement'.

RESOLVED - to approve the grant funding agreement document for Core and General Grants and agreed that if further minor changes to the agreement were required the Clerk in conjunction with the Chair could complete.

FEC2023/60 RESOLVE TO EXCLUDE MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC -

RESOLVED that agenda item FEC2023/61 be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

FEC2023/61 STAFFING UPDATE - TO RECEIVE A GENERAL UPDATE FROM THE TOWN CLERK

RESOLVED – staffing update noted



FEC2023/62 DATE OF NEXT MEETING Monday 5th February 2024

Noted

The Chairman closed the meeting at **11:05**

End of document

Signed.....

Dated.....

DRAFT