

## Minutes of Finance Committee held 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018

In attendance: M. Harriman M.J. Edwards, J. Holmes, B Blackmore, ,

Chair: Councillor M.J. Edwards

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer: S Baxter

Apologies: Councillors J Hobbley ,M. Wilde

### **Not for publication pursuant to the provisions of Sub-Section (4) of section 100A of Paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)**

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1. **Apologies** were given and accepted.
2. There were no members of the press and public present for the meeting.
3. The **Minutes of the meeting** held on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018 were agreed as a true record.
4. **Quarterly Financial Report:** The Clerk presented an Income and expenditure report for the first and second quarters. This was considered .Queries were discussed .Action: **Clerk to make amendments and checks prior to the document being available to Full Council on the 1<sup>st</sup> November.**
5. **External Audit:** The Clerk gave an overview of the response of the External Auditor Grant Thornton and advised that the Audit Returned was a qualified one. This was specifically in one aspect of the Audit only which concerned the date at which the Notice of Appointment of the date for the exercise of Electors Rights had been posted. Grant Thornton have suggested it should be 20 working days posted after Council has met to approve the audit and not prior to. However, the letter sent by Grant Thornton and the instructions for doing so are not that specific. A discussion took place about the timescales around the time of the audit, Council's approval and the form of words that needs to go back to the external auditor in response. **Action: Clerk to draft a letter.** The external auditors had also raised as an observation the level of General reserves held by the Council. It was agreed to consider this as part of the precept setting process in November.
6. **Review of Standing Orders:** The Clerk had prepared a tabled document detailing all the amendments from the revised NALC Model Standing Orders. These were reviewed and were agreed. It was noted that the document had already been adopted by Full Council with the proviso that Finance Committee review these amendments. It was further noted that a number of the amendments related to the introduction of GDPR earlier in the year. The Clerk drew member's attention to a circular from SLCC which advised that the Clerk can take on the role of Data Protection Officer. It was agreed that this should be recommended to Full Council that the Clerk undertake this role as part of overall duties, but that this be subject to regular review in case there is more impact than can be presently foreseen. **Action: Clerk to put on agenda for Full Council.**
7. **Grass cutting Contract tender process:** The Clerk advised that this document had been finalised by General Amenities Committee and Cemetery Committee in terms of content and that hedge cutting had been included and timescales adapted as advised. The Clerk and Councillor Atherton will meet shortly to discuss the process in terms of timescales for the tender. As there has been no pre-tender process with contractors, it should be an open tender process, advertised on the Council's website and sell2Wales, as advised by One Voice Wales.
8. **Lighting replacement tender process:** In conjunction with the previous item, the Clerk explained that she had researched in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, for EU thresholds etc. and had sought the advice of One Voice Wales. The process undertaken

by the Lighting Committee appeared to fit with the restricted tender process, whereby there had been some pre-tender discussion with contractors, followed by a review and a selection of those contractors the Council wished to invite to tender. The Clerk cautioned that, following advice from One Voice Wales, perhaps in hindsight the pre-tender process may have been advertised at that point. However, it was agreed after discussion that the process followed had been based on Council's own financial regulations, sound initial research, noted that it was a specialist and technical process, and an independent specialist advisor had been consulted with in a meeting, and that the companies invited had already provided locally, including with the Principal Unitary authorities, had been recommended as trustworthy, long established, and providing value for and others had been considered as part of the research. It was agreed that as long as the process followed had been clearly documented, that the Council should proceed with this restricted tender process and invite the three contractors selected to tender for the work.

9. **Review of Grants Process:** The Clerk advised that she had made the amendments to the form as suggested at the previous meeting, and these had been circulated. It was agreed that these amendments and the review process were complete.
10. **Allotment Matters update:** The Clerk advised that she had notified the solicitor of the Councils' wish to engage him. She had not heard anything further in terms of a letter being drafted but had been in contact with the secretary. In the meantime, a request had been received from a member the allotments society about contacting the Solicitor direct, in order to appraise him of the society's position in the matter. It was agreed this could go ahead.
11. **Report of the Remuneration Panel:** The Clerk raised this for clarification in case there was anything further to be put in place. It was agreed this has been decided upon already and process is in place for members to claim as required.
12. **Scheme of Delegation document:** The Clerk circulated a draft document which was commented upon. It was agreed this should be recommended to Council for adoption.  
**Action: Clerk to make necessary amendments and put on the agenda for next full Council meeting.**
13. **Staffing matters:** The Chair reminded that the **exclusion of Press and public should apply for this matter and in particular for any subsequent publication of the minutes.**
14. **Precept Meeting:** A discussion took place about any preparatory work required.
15. **Forward Work Plan for Finance Committee:** The Clerk advised she would update the Forward work plan for the next meeting.
16. **Date of the next Meeting:** This was confirmed as the 19<sup>th</sup> November, specifically for the precept. A further meeting may need to be called if required sooner.