

## **DRAFT Minutes of Finance Committee held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2021.**

In attendance: Councillors M. Harriman, M.J. Edwards, J. Holmes, K. Hobbley, J. Hobbley, J. Jones

Chair: Councillor M.J. Edwards

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer: S Baxter

Apologies: Councillors M. Wilde, A. Merry

*i) This meeting took place remotely, using 'Go To' Meetings software, under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (following The Local Authorities (Coronavirus)(Meetings)(Wales) Regulations 2020. which make provision for meetings to take place remotely.*

---

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were given and accepted. There were no members of the press and public present for the meeting.
2. **Declarations of Interest:** Councillors were reminded of the need to declare an interest in the matters under discussion. Councillor Holmes declared an interest concerning the lease of Allington Park.
3. **Minutes of Finance Committee meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 and matters arising:** The minutes were **AGREED** as an accurate record, and no matters were arising.
4. **Report on Income and expenditure for the first quarter of 2021-22:** It was noted this had already been to Full Council and been accepted there. Members of the Committee had no further comment to make.
5. **Meeting Arrangements as reported to Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> of September:** The Clerk explained the main points of the Welsh Government guidance received from One Voice Wales. This provides for meeting to be held electronically via conference technology, and as hybrid meetings, but not solely physical meetings. This brings challenges of ensuring adequate audio, and these were discussed. In addition, summonses to Councillors for meetings can be sent electronically, unless an individual Councillor requests otherwise. It was thought premature to bring in an assessment from a consultant. Councillor Edwards proposed a reserve to be set aside of £1500 to cover any costs of technology that might be required. The Clerk will continue to keep abreast of what other Councils are doing. It was **AGREED** to keep this as a regular item on the agenda and see what comes up.
6. **Report of Internal Auditor:** The report of the Internal Auditor had been examined and **AGREED** at the previous meeting. However, the Clerk wished it to be minuted that the matter raised by the Auditor concerning the Clerk's contract had been investigated, following the previous meeting. This was **AGREED**. Items from the previous Audit 2019-2020, were raised but the meeting was advised these had previously been recorded as having been resolved in full, including the Employment allowance having been refunded to HMRC. The Internal Auditor had been satisfied of this during the latest Audit.
7. **External Audit:** The Clerk advised that no report had been received as yet from the External Auditor, being Wales Audit Office.
8. **Progress on Allotments application to Charity Commission:** The Clerk advised that the Solicitor appointed has recently lodged an application with the Charity Commission and this has been accepted although not formally so. The Clerk will chase on the current position with regards to the University of Wales and the sale.
9. **Briefing Note presented to Full Council on the 1st of July regarding expenditure :** The Clerk advised that this matter had been to Full Council, and a request was made that this be brought back to Finance Committee for scrutiny. Councillor Edwards explained that Council will approve all payments before they are made unless they are already delegated. The Clerk advised this is already

set out within the Financial Regulations. Councillor Jones explained the matter concerned the Council's decision making and whether the amounts being requested to be approved should appear on the agenda. The advice obtained from Audit office was that there is no legal requirement to do so, although the Council will endeavour to do so as good practice. A discussion took place about circumstances when figures or estimates can appear on the agenda. It was noted that in some circumstances they can be and in others it may not be possible in advance of the meeting. The Clerk explained the recommendation from the Wales Auditor. After discussion, it was **AGREED** that a clause shall be worded for agreement which will cover the matter and can be put into Financial Regulations with Council approval.

10. **Items for expenditure from Reserves:** Councillor Edwards proposed that a proposal to spend money when it has not been budgeted for which is out of general reserves, needs to be specified as such on the agenda. This would then be minuted as a departure from the original budget. The Clerk explained that this shall be a standing agenda item as per previous meeting. An invoice has been received for Lighting maintenance and inspection, which gives rise for concern and is higher than has been budgeted for. After consideration it was **AGREED** that this invoice should be paid, and it shall be noted that this has gone over the budget as agreed.
11. **Any urgent requests for Grant Aid:** There were no urgent requests received for grant aid. The deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> November for grant applications to be received was noted and Councillor Jones was thanked for circulating the revised Grant application forms.
12. **Members urgent matters for consideration.** Councillor Jones raised a concern about the budget as set out for the library and this was clarified as being £4500 for 2021-22. A discussion took place about Excel documents.
13. **Part II items: Staffing Matters and recruitment process: It was noted that the meeting had moved into Part ii proceedings for the following items.**
14. **Renewal of lease of Allington Park**
15. **Date of next meeting.** The next scheduled meeting of the Finance Committee will be November 22<sup>nd</sup> (for setting the budget) at 6. pm: the venue will be confirmed but may be held remotely.