

## Finance and Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021, held at 7.00pm, zoom code 86100099192. Cllr Yarham (Chairman) presided over Cllr Miss Moran, Cllr Brookes, Cllr Broughton, Cllr Shelton, Cllr Miss Collins and Cllr Mrs Redshaw. The Clerk was also in attendance.

### 28. Chairman's Welcome

Cllr Yarham welcomed the members to the meeting.

### 29. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

### 30. Declarations of Interest

None were declared.

### 31. Notes of minutes from the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Cllr Yarham asked the committee if they were to accept the minutes of the meeting dated Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020. It was proposed by Cllr Yarham, seconded by Cllr Miss Moran and **RESOLVED** with 5 in favour and 2 abstentions that the minutes could be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. The clerk will sign on behalf of the chair.

7.03pm Cllr Mrs Sked entered the meeting.

### 32. Clerk's Report

The Clerk provided a report prior to the meeting which included the following updates:

1. Three members are still not using the .gov.uk email addresses. BT Business will continue to forward emails from the old account to the .gov.uk one for both clerks for the time being.
2. The new shared drive is in action. A few documents are still 'lost' and the IT contact will look into this.
3. The new website was ready for the calendar year end and still requires some work to bring it up to date (for example photos will not load). The requirement to add all documents as HTML makes it time consuming as clerks need to convert documents from the existing format to HTML each time a document is added.
4. The Town Hall has continued to remain largely closed to visitors due to the pandemic and the general cleaner and window cleaner have not visited.
5. All electricity accounts have now been switched to British Gas light following the end of the OPUS contract.

### 33. Correspondence

Received from	Date Received	Subject	Committee Response
CCLA (Public Sector Deposit	02/03/2021	Negative yield warning and measures to be taken	Noted

Fund)			
West Yorkshire Pension Fund	17/03/2021	Contribution rates 2021/22	Noted

#### **34. Omega report**

The clerk had provided a copy of the Omega report to members prior to the meeting and Cllr Yarham asked if there were any questions. Cllr Broughton had received his council tax bill and Cllrs Broughton and Miss Collins asked for confirmation of the costs of the Sanctum and the cemetery gardens. The clerk confirmed the costs and Cllr Miss Moran reminded members that these costs had been agreed by Full Council. Cllr Mrs Sked confirmed that the sanctums are self funding via charges made for placement of ashes. Members discussed the retrospective costs and Cllr Yarham agreed to add an item to the next Full Council agenda in order to revisit the costs with a chronology and relevant facts.

#### **35. Year-end closedown to include a review of Ear Marked Reserves and projected under/overspend for 2020/21**

The clerk had provided members with a copy of the precept information including estimated outturn costs for 2020/21 prior to the meeting. These figures were provided to SKDC with the precept request made in December 2020 and show a projected underspend of £21,000. Cllr Yarham asked whether the amount should be allocated equally between committees and members agreed to allocate any underspend after the financial year end. Cllr Brookes asked whether the potential underspend would be taken into account for next year's financial planning procedures, and the clerk confirmed that it would.

#### **36. Five-year plan**

Members discussed whether such a plan should be considered by each committee individually, whether a plan should cover just financial aspects or all aspects and whether to allocate funds to some of the 25 projects included in the Neighbourhood plan, which itself includes some council and some community group initiatives. Cllr Brookes advised members that a plan should be made for longer term items, such as vehicle replacement, and should consider how the needs of Market Deeping may change in the coming years.

#### **37. For members to consider an amendment to the Committee Terms of Reference/Standing Orders: to limit spending not approved by Full Council to £5000 in total per annum**

Cllr Yarham reminded members that the spending limit change to the Committee Terms of Reference was made with the support of the Finance and Personnel committee, and any expenditure was subject to funds being already precepted or available within Ear Marked Reserves. The committee voting process and the existence of funds therefore creates enough scrutiny to safeguard expenditure. Cllrs Brookes and Broughton believed the current arrangement should be left in place, as there needs to be an assumption that the committee has sufficient expertise to make a decision on spending. Items of expenditure can be reported in the chair's report to Full Council. It was then proposed by Cllr Yarham, seconded by Cllr Miss Moran and **RESOLVED** with 4 in favour and 4 abstentions to continue with the current procedure.

#### **38. Review of the Asset Register**

Following a query raised at the last Full Council meeting, the clerk advised members that she had referred to the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance guidance for smaller authorities, and to

LALC, and could confirm that devaluation does not need to be shown on the asset register. Additionally, the purchase price of the Town Hall should be shown as £1 for audit purposes.

**39. For members to consider information included with annual tax notification to residents**

The clerk had provided members with a copy of a Stamford Council Tax bill as supplied by Cllr Yarham. The bill included estimated income and expenditure across the various committees. Members discussed this method of notification to tax payers as opposed to listing large items of expenditure, as per the current Market Deeping notices. Members agreed that it was more transparent, and would be clearer for residents to continue to receive bills as they do now, with large items of expenditure detailed to enable residents to query them if they wish to.

**40. Digital Council progress: website/email accounts/tablet provision**

The website and email address issues had been addressed under the clerk’s report. With respect to tablet provision, Cllr Yarham advised members that there were 2 stages left until the setting up of the new tablets was complete and he will advise members further as soon as possible.

**41. For members to receive reports from the internal auditor**

The clerk had issued members with copies of the reports prior to the meeting. Cllr Yarham asked for further information and the clerk explained that the internal auditor briefing was in accordance with the Joint Panel on accountability and governance for smaller authorities and briefly listed the categories for examination. Sample transactions audited had all been handled correctly and Cllr Yarham thanked the clerk for the positive report findings. Cllr Brookes asked if the process had remained the same during the pandemic and the clerk confirmed that it had.

**42. Personnel – Consideration to go into Closed Session. To include Staff matters**

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** unanimously to move into Closed Session to members of the press and public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, for members to discuss items that contained information of a confidential nature: staff issues. It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to sign off the period of probation. It was then **RESOLVED** unanimously to come out of Closed Session.

The Chairman thanked all members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed at 8.04pm.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7pm.

**Chairman’s signature**.....

**Date**.....