



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Wednesday 17th May 2023 at 7pm
at The Harlington**

PRESENT

Councillors: P. Einchcomb, S. Engström, L. Holt (Chairman), R. Richmond, B. Schofield, S. Tilley, D. Taylor and G. Woods.

In Attendance:

Rochelle Halliday – Executive Officer
Alex Robins – The Harlington General Manager
Sarah Moore – Finance & Admin Manager
2 representatives from All Saints Church (left after Item 12)
2 representatives from Vox Choir (left after Item 12)
1 representative from Revive Ukraine (left after Item 12)

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Holt was nominated and seconded for the position of Chairman for the Committee. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Holt be elected as Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee for the local government year 2023/2024.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Engström was nominated and seconded for the position of Vice Chairman for the Committee. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Engström be elected as Vice Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee for the local government year 2023/2024.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Robinson (prior engagement).

Cllr Fang was absent.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made for any item on the agenda.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 5 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 6 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 15th February 2023 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

It was agreed to consider item 12 next.

**PF MAY 2023 ITEM 7 DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY
RETURN (AGAR) AND REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROLS
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2023**

a) Draft AGAR for the year ending 31st March 2023

Members received the draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return figures. An updated AGAR, to show the revised figures after the close of the financial year on 15th May 2023, was tabled.

The year end position showed an improved position against budget due to the delay of some projects, in-year cost savings and a much stronger performance of The Harlington than budgeted.

b) Review of Internal Controls 31st March 2023

Members considered the document reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's internal controls.

It was agreed to add obtaining legal advice to assist with decision making to section 3 – Professional Advice.

RESOLVED

1. To note the draft AGAR the year ending 31st March 2023.
2. To recommend to Council approval of the report reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control, subject to the change detailed above.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 8 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Members considered the financial reports for the period ending 31st March 2023:

- a) Year End report
- b) Harlington Monthly Performance Totals
- c) 2022/23 Year to Date and Budget Projections report
- d) Balance sheet as at 31st March 2022
- e) Statutory Income & Expenditure
- f) Bank & Investments Reconciliation
- g) List of Purchase Ledger Payments
- h) List of Debtors

The Year End report and Harlington monthly totals reports were reviewed. The Executive Officer tabled a revised balance sheet showing the actuals for the year end. The final balance sheet will be issued at the June Council meeting.

Members were informed that there is extensive badger activity at the cemetery, resulting in the deep excavation of some graves. Due to the risk to public safety, the Council's Chairman and the Executive Officer have used emergency powers (Financial Regulation 3.2.5) to authorise a consultant to prepare and submit the licence application to Natural England to manage the sett.

Further costs will be reported to the Council as it is likely that emergency funding will need to be allocated to manage the badger sett.

The Harlington General Manager left the meeting at 8.15pm.

Cllr Robinson had confirmed by email to Cllrs Holt and Schofield that the March 2023 bank reconciliation check had been completed without any qualifications.

RESOLVED

1. To accept the Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports for the period 31st March 2023.
2. To accept the emailed statement from Cllr Robinson that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for March 2023 have been verified and signed.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 9 DRAFT ASSET REGISTER AT 31st MARCH 2023

The Asset Register is now recorded within the Council's main accounting system. A check is to be performed on some data entry anomalies for current values, which were identified at the meeting.

RESOLVED

That, subject to the amendments discussed, the Asset Register at 31st March 2023 is recommended to the Council for approval.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 10 INVESTMENT REPORT

Members considered the quarterly investment report.

Officers were asked to look into the Cambridge Building Society account for Councils –
Action: Executive Officer.

RESOLVED

To note the balances held in the Fleet Town Council Accounts.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 11 LIST OF REGULAR DIRECT DEBITS

Members reviewed the list of regularly scheduled direct debits for Council expenditure. A query was raised regarding the Ancells Pavilion business rates entry. *Addendum:* this listing is correct as the Community Centre has an exemption for business rates in this financial year.

RESOLVED

To approve the listed direct debits for the current financial year.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 12 GRANT APPLICATIONS

Members received and discussed the following grant applications:

a) All Saints Church - requesting £1,000 towards creating a new community garden

- If the Church are unable raise the full amount for the project, they may take longer to complete the work and will have to do more themselves, but the project will still go ahead.

The representatives from All Saints Church left at 7:10pm.

b) Vox Choir - requesting £1,000 towards venue hire and associated costs for a charity concert at the Harlington

- The group were advised to also apply to other bodies.

c) Revive Ukraine – requesting £800 towards the hire of The Harlington for social events

- Since Hart District Council hold specific funding to provide support to Ukrainian's in the district, the group was advised to make an application to Hart District Council first.
- If unsuccessful, the Committee will reconsider the application at a future meeting.

d) Victim Support - £200 towards personal security items for victims of crime and their families

- Next year Victim Support should attend the meeting to express any application for funding in person.
- The charity support victims of crime in the Fleet area.

All members of the public left at 7.35pm.

RESOLVED

1. To approve issuing a grant of £1,000 to All Saints Church towards the creation of a community garden at All Saints Church, Fleet.
2. To approve issuing a grant of £1,000 to Vox Choir towards hiring The Harlington, drinks and associated costs for a charity concert in June.
3. To approve issuing a grant of £200 to Victim Support towards the purchase of personal security items for victims of crime and their families.
4. To note the record of grants awarded to date.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 13 POLICIES

a) Health and Safety

Members reviewed the proposed amendments to the Health and Safety policy, which were largely to update the allocation of responsibilities to reflect current practice.

Members acknowledged that it is important to have a regular programme of health and safety training in place.

It was agreed that the policy should be amended to reflect that any policy changes are to be reviewed by the Policy and Finance Committee and any operational matters reported to the RLA Committee.

b)Data Protection and Privacy

The proposed changes to the policy were reviewed. The changes were made to ensure the policy is legally compliant and consistent with best practice. Various typographical errors were identified, which will be corrected in the policy.

Members discussed the sharing of personal data received as a Councillor. **Action: Executive Officer** to share this policy with the whole Council.

It was noted that this is now a Data Protection policy only. A privacy policy is a separate document that needs to be created,

c)CCTV

Members reviewed the proposed changes to this policy, required to bring it in line with best practice.

A small number of corrections were identified.

d) Tree

The revise Tree policy was reviewed. Members suggested amendments to items 5 and 6.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Health and Safety policy, subject to the amendments discussed.
2. To approve the Data Protection policy, subject to the amendments discussed.
3. To approve the CCTV policy, subject to the amendments discussed.
4. To approve the Tree policy, subject to the amendments discussed.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 14 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Members noted the report of the Executive Officer.

PF MAY 2023 ITEM 15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee will be held on Wednesday 19th July 2023 at 7pm in the Harlington.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed: **Date**.....

Chairman