



Notice is hereby given of

THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

on

Wednesday 24th July 2024 at 7pm at The Harlington

All Committee members are summoned to attend.

To Councillors:

P. Einchcomb, R. Fang, L. Holt, R. Richmond, R. Robinson, B. Schofield, D. Taylor, S. Tilley and G. Woods

Rita Tong, Executive Officer
17th July 2024

AGENDA

1.	APOLOGIES Schedule 12 of the LGA 1972 requires a record to be kept of members present, and that this record forms part of the minutes of the meeting. A resolution must be passed on whether the reason(s) for a member's absence are acceptable.
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Under the Local Authorities Localism Act 2011, members must declare any interest and the nature of that interest, which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting. Members are reminded that they must disclose both the existence and the nature of a personal interest that they have in any matter to be considered at this meeting. A personal interest will be considered a prejudicial interest if this is one in which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the members' judgement of the public interest.
3.	QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 min per person maximum 15 minutes) To receive questions and statements from members of the public.
4.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 15 th May 2024 (<i>copy attached</i>).
Part 1 – ITEMS FOR DECISION	
5.	QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT To consider and agree the quarterly Harlington Monthly Performance Totals (<i>copy attached</i>). RECOMMENDATIONS To receive and accept the quarterly Harlington Monthly Performance Totals for the period ending 30 th June 2024.
6.	INVESTMENT REPORT To consider the quarterly investment report for the period ending 30 th June 2024 (<i>copy attached</i>).

The Nationwide investment matured on 24th June 2024. Members to consider whether to reinvest with Nationwide (and if so, for what period) or to transfer funds to either the HSBC Savings account or the CCLA investment account.

Current interest rates for reinvestment in Nationwide are as follows:

Business 35 Day Saver	3.35%
Business 95 Day Saver	4.30%
Business 125 Day Saver	4.40%
Business 6 Month Saver	4.80%
Business 1 Year Saver	4.25%
Business 18 Month Saver	4.00%

RECOMMENDATION

- a) To note the balances held in the Fleet Town Council Accounts.
- b) To determine what action to take with the matured nationwide investment monies.

7. GRANT APPLICATION

To consider and agree the following application for grant funding (*copy attached*):

Fleet Phoenix - £1,200 for the office and storeroom rent of The Point Youth Centre based in Harlington Way, Fleet, for the 2024/25 financial year.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To consider the grant request.

8. POLICY REVIEW – AGENDAS AND MINUTES

The Executive Officer has been asked that whenever a Policy comes up for review, that the procedural elements contained within the Policy be removed. Accordingly, the following has been provided for Members to review:

- a) The Agendas and Minutes Policy as approved in February 2017
- b) The proposed Agendas and Minutes Policy
- c) The proposed Agendas and Minutes Procedures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve the amended Agendas and Minutes Policy and Agendas and Minutes Procedure.

9. POLICY REVIEW – CO-OPTION

The Executive Officer has reviewed the current Co-Option Policy and believes the document is a procedure rather than a policy. This is because it describes detailed steps and specific actions that need to be taken by candidates and council members. Also, it provides clear instructions on how candidates should apply for co-option, what qualifications they must meet, and how the selection process will be conducted, particularly during virtual meetings.

The Executive Officer has revised the final sentence to remove references to the pandemic, ensuring the principle applies to all virtual meetings regardless of circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve the amended Co-Option Procedure.

10. POLICY REVIEW – ELECTRICITY ON THE VIEWS

The Executive Officer has reviewed the current Electricity on The Views Policy and believes the document is a procedure rather than a policy. This is because it describes the exact processes and responsibilities involved in providing electricity for events at The Views Park. It offers a clear, step-by-step guide for implementation, ensuring all parties understand their roles and the necessary actions. Policies, in contrast, would set out the broader rules and expectations governing such activities without detailing the operational steps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve the amended Electricity on The Views Procedure.

11.	<p>POLICY REVIEW – GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY The Executive Officer has been asked that whenever a Policy comes up for review, that the procedural elements contained within the Policy be removed. Accordingly, the following has been provided for Members to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Gifts and Hospitality Policy - December 2019 b) The proposed Gifts and Hospitality Policy c) The proposed Gifts and Hospitality Procedures. <p>RECOMMENDATIONS To approve the amended Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Gifts and Hospitality Procedures.</p>
12.	<p>POLICY REVIEW – MEDIA The Executive Officer has been asked that whenever a Policy comes up for review, that the procedural elements contained within the Policy be removed. Accordingly, the following has been provided for Members to review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Media Policy – July 2021 b) The proposed Media Policy c) The proposed Media Procedures. <p>RECOMMENDATIONS To approve the amended Media Policy and Media Procedures.</p>
13.	<p>2025/26 BUDGET PREPARATION To consider the report from the Executive Officer detailing issues that need to be considered when setting the 2025/26 budget (<i>copy attached</i>).</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS Members are asked to consider the report and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Determine whether there are any other issues that need to be considered in the 2025/26 budget. b. Determine what issues impacting the 2025/26 budget require further work and decide what information they require to address those issues. c. Determine whether they wish to reconvene the Budget Working Group, and if so, set some meeting dates.
Part 2 – ITEMS TO NOTE	
14.	<p>ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive and note announcements from the Executive Officer or any Member by permission of the Chair.</p>
15.	<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING The next meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee is scheduled for Wednesday 16th October 2024 at 7pm in the Harlington.</p>
Part 3 – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS	
<p>Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public in accordance with Section 1(2) and by reason of the confidential nature of the business of the Town Council, the Public and Press will be excluded from the meeting.</p> <p>The following types of business will be treated as confidential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees b. Terms of tenders, and proposals and counter-proposals in negotiations for contracts c. Receipt of professional legal advice and preparation of cases in legal proceedings d. The early stages of any dispute e. Matters of a commercial nature <p>There are no confidential matters for consideration.</p>	



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Wednesday 15th May 2024 at 7pm
at The Harlington**

PRESENT

Councillors: P. Einchcomb, L. Holt (Chairman), R. Robinson, B. Schofield, S. Tilley and G. Woods

Also Present:

Rochelle Halliday – Executive Officer
Alex Robins – Harlington General Manager (left after item 8)
Sarah Moore – Finance and Administration Manager
Louise Rogers – Administration Support Officer
Katie McCaffrey – Communications Officer
The Vine Church representative

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 1

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Holt was nominated and seconded for the position of Chairman of 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 2024/2025.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 2

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

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

RESOLVED

That Cllr George Woods be elected as Vice Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee for the local government year 2024/2025.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 3

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted apologies of absence from Cllr Taylor (work commitments).

Cllrs Fang and Richmond were absent.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 4

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 5

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 6

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on Wednesday 21st February 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman stated that the financial modelling in preparation for the Harlington development should be progressed by the Harlington Working Group as soon as possible.

Members agreed to consider item 12 next.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 7

DRAFT ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) AND REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROLS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st MARCH 2024

a) Draft AGAR for the year ending 31st March 2024

Members received the draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return figures. These are the final draft figures.

Members also reviewed the report summarising the significant variances for the financial year, compared to the previous year.

b) Review of Internal Controls 31st March 2024

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

No further comments were made.

RESOLVED

1. To note the draft AGAR the year ending 31st March 2024.
2. To note the summary of significant variances report.
3. To recommend to Council approval of the report reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 8

QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered the financial reports for the period ending 31st March 2024, as listed below:

- a) Quarterly Report
- b) Harlington Monthly Performance Totals
- c) 2023/24 Year to Date Budget Report
- d) Balance sheet as at 31st March 2024
- e) Bank & Investments Reconciliation
- f) List of Purchase Ledger Payments
- g) List of Debtors

The following matters were discussed:

Quarterly Report and Year to Date Budget Report

- The Earmarked reserves and the general fund balance were discussed. The closing general fund balance is £60k higher than the previous financial year.

- The interest from Harlington Development savings accounts should be posted to the Harlington Development in future.
- Members discussed that where there is a surplus balance at the year end, this should ideally be allocated to project work, rather than to fund operational expenditure.
- It was advised that the RLA Committee should look at costings for the Skate Park refurbishment and The Views playground refurbishment in more detail.
- To recommend to Council that £60k is allocated from the general fund to the Play Equipment earmarked reserve, to contributed towards major capital works in this area.

Harlington Monthly Performance Totals

- The Harlington ticket sales have continued to be buoyant.

Bank Reconciliation

- Councillor Robinson confirmed that the bank reconciliation and payments for March 2024 have been checked and that there are no qualifications.

RESOLVED

1. To receive and accept the financial reports for the period to 31st March 2024:

- a) Quarterly Report
- b) Harlington Monthly Performance Totals
- c) 2023/24 Year to Date Budget Report
- d) Balance sheet as at 31st March 2024
- e) Bank & Investments Reconciliation
- f) List of Purchase Ledger Payments
- g) List of Debtors

2. To accept the statement from Councillor Robinson that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for March 2024 have been verified and signed.

3. To recommend to Council that £60,000 is transferred from the general fund to the Play Equipment earmarked reserve.

The Harlington General Manager left the meeting at 8:05pm.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 9

DRAFT ASSET REGISTER AT 31ST MARCH 2024

Members received the updated Asset Register for the year ending March 2024.

A full audit of the assets in The Harlington has taken place. The asset value has increased, mainly due to technical and IT equipment that was previously not included. The new paths at Fleet Cemetery and new open spaces equipment were also added.

RESOLVED

That the Asset Register, valued at £848,544 on 31st March 2024, is recommended to the Council for approval.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 10

LIST OF REGULAR DIRECT DEBITS FOR 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR

Members reviewed the list of regularly scheduled direct debits for Council expenditure.

It was discussed that average amount per month for gas at The Harlington is based on more than 12 months expenditure, and so the average going forward will be much lower because of the timings of the bills being received.

RESOLVED

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

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 11

INVESTMENT REPORT

Members considered the quarterly investment report.

RESOLVED

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

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 12

GRANT APPLICATION

The representative from The Vine Church provided Members with background information on the youth service they operate, for the grant application:

- The youth group would like to replace some of the recreational equipment.
- 40 teenagers attend to the club each Friday night, 15 of the teenagers are from Fleet and 25 of the teenagers are from Church Crookham.
- The grant funding will enable the items to be purchased as soon as possible, ready for the next intake of children.

The Vine Church representative has advised that the Youth Officer at The Vine Church to connect with Fleet Town Council to promote their youth service.

RESOLVED

- 1) To approve grant funding of £500 to The Vine Church, Odiham, for recreational equipment for a weekly youth club operating from Church Crookham Community Centre.
- 2) To note the record of grants for 2024/25.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 13

POLICY REVIEWS

Members considered the following policies, with the comments recorded below:

Absence Policy

- 1.2 – The first sentence is too specific considering that the policy focuses on other absences.
- To remove the line ‘such as short term illnesses and acute medical conditions.’
- 1.4 - To remove ‘sickness’ on the first line.
- 4.5 – To remove ‘... to keep the employee updated on matters at work’. To add a new final sentence, ‘It may be necessary to update the member of staff on work matters to keep them up to date’.
- 7 – To change the heading to read ‘Sickness Whilst on Annual Leave’.
- 9.1 – To change ‘work in person’ to ‘work in the office.’
- 11.1 – To add in a definition of the trigger points for persistence short term absence.
- 12.2 – To remove the paragraph from the policy.
- 13 and 13.1 – To remove the heading and paragraph from the policy.
- 14.1 – To change the second sentence ‘if an employee was’ to ‘if an employee is.’
- Officers to check if the trigger points outlined contain standard timeframes and amend as required.

- To change '(as detailed in 11.)' to '(as detailed in 11.1)'.

Menopause Policy

- Members discussed that the policy can be used as a workplace guide.
- No changes were made to the policy.

Rules and Regulations- Fleet Cemetery Policy

- 5.3 – to read '3 feet 3 inches' rather than '3 feet'.
- 7.2 and 8.8 – to swap around the imperial and metric measurements order, subject to confirming with the Cemetery Clerk if a specific order is required.

RESOLVED

1. Absence Policy – To approve the policy subject to the above amendments.
2. Menopause Policy – To approve the Policy.
3. Rules and Regulations - Fleet Cemetery – To approve the policy subject to the above amendments, and to check the order of the measurements.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 14

EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Members noted the Executive Officer's report.

PF MAY 2024 ITEM 15

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman and Vice Chairman are both unavailable for the next meeting on Wednesday 17th July 2024.

Members agreed to change the date to Wednesday 24th July 2024.

The next meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee will be held on Wednesday 24th July 2024 at 7pm in the Harlington.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:10pm.

Signed: **Date:**

Chairman

2024/25

Monthly Performance Totals (net of VAT)

April	Hall Hire Income	Ticket sales	% of capacity	Perf costs	Contribution	Ancillary sales	Cost of stock	Contribution	Casual Staffing	Total performance income	Total performance costs	Total performance contribution
Neil Diamond	£ -	£ 3,115.00	78%	£ 2,150.00	£ 965.00	£ 1,122.40	£ 452.15	£ 670.25	£ 251.68	£ 4,237.40	£ 2,853.83	£ 1,383.57
Lunchtime Jazz	£ -	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 188.16	£ 75.38	£ 112.78	£ -	£ 188.16	£ 75.38	£ 112.78
Comedy Club	£ -	£ 1,441.67	52%	£ 1,000.00	£ 441.67	£ 1,203.99	£ 488.86	£ 715.13	£ 223.08	£ 2,645.66	£ 1,711.94	£ 933.72
Jazz Club	£ -	£ 1,525.00	65%	£ 1,062.62	£ 462.38	£ 518.57	£ 208.66	£ 309.91	£ 77.22	£ 2,043.57	£ 1,348.50	£ 695.07
Roller Disco	£ 245.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 397.07	£ 173.18	£ 223.89	£ 74.36	£ 642.07	£ 247.54	£ 394.53
Abba Fever	£ -	£ 4,451.67	100%	£ 1,350.00	£ 3,101.67	£ 2,420.99	£ 971.26	£ 1,449.73	£ 374.66	£ 6,872.66	£ 2,695.92	£ 4,176.74
The Jam'd	£ -	£ 3,716.67	50%	£ 1,500.00	£ 2,216.67	£ 2,722.83	£ 1,092.09	£ 1,630.74	£ 343.19	£ 6,439.50	£ 2,935.28	£ 3,504.22
Steve Harley	£ -	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Film Club x 2	£ 300.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 294.91	£ 118.54	£ 176.37	£ 12.01	£ 594.91	£ 130.55	£ 464.36
Rock Choir x 2	£ 200.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 29.00	£ 11.60	£ 17.40	£ -	£ 229.00	£ 11.60	£ 217.40
Ceroc x 4	£ 1,139.20	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 462.99	£ 185.82	£ 277.17	£ 45.04	£ 1,602.19	£ 230.86	£ 1,371.33
TOTALS FOR APRIL	£ 1,884.20	£ 14,250.01		£ 7,062.62	£ 7,187.39	£ 9,360.91	£ 3,777.54	£ 5,583.37	£ 1,401.24	£ 25,495.12	£ 12,241.40	£ 13,253.72
May	Hall Hire Income	Ticket sales	% of capacity	Perf costs	Contribution	Ancillary sales	Cost of stock	Contribution	Casual Staffing	Total performance income	Total performance costs	Total performance contribution
John Lydon	£ -	£ 11,119.16	100%	£ 8,421.76	£ 2,697.40	£ 1,698.91	£ 681.98	£ 1,016.93	£ 291.74	£ 12,818.07	£ 9,395.48	£ 3,422.59
Johnny Cash Roadshow	£ -	£ 2,860.00	62%	£ 3,500.00	£ 640.00	£ 1,060.66	£ 426.45	£ 634.21	£ 234.52	£ 3,920.66	£ 4,160.97	£ 240.31
REM by Stipe	£ -	£ 2,171.67	54%	£ 1,500.06	£ 671.61	£ 1,103.74	£ 444.11	£ 659.63	£ 191.62	£ 3,275.41	£ 2,135.79	£ 1,139.62
Film Club x 1	£ 150.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 138.82	£ 55.78	£ 83.04	£ -	£ 288.82	£ 55.78	£ 233.04
Jazz Club	£ -	£ 1,891.67	81%	£ 986.74	£ 904.93	£ 668.65	£ 268.74	£ 399.91	£ 128.41	£ 2,560.32	£ 1,383.89	£ 1,176.43
Roller Disco	£ 245.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 515.74	£ 222.51	£ 293.23	£ 79.21	£ 760.74	£ 301.72	£ 459.02
Comedy Club	£ -	£ 1,113.33	42%	£ 1,000.00	£ 113.33	£ 1,077.90	£ 434.43	£ 643.47	£ 191.18	£ 2,191.23	£ 1,625.61	£ 565.62
Lunchtime Jazz	£ -	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 156.66	£ 63.17	£ 93.49	£ -	£ 156.66	£ 63.17	£ 93.49
Rock Choir x 3	£ 300.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 85.57	£ 35.30	£ 50.27	£ -	£ 385.57	£ 35.30	£ 350.27
Ceroc x 5	£ 1,424.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 254.49	£ 103.48	£ 151.01	£ 48.04	£ 1,678.49	£ 151.52	£ 1,526.97
TOTALS FOR MAY	£ 2,119.00	£ 19,155.83		£ 15,408.56	£ 3,747.27	£ 6,761.14	£ 2,735.95	£ 4,025.19	£ 1,164.72	£ 28,035.97	£ 19,309.23	£ 8,726.74
June	Hall Hire Income	Ticket sales	% of capacity	Perf costs	Contribution	Ancillary sales	Cost of stock	Contribution	Casual Staffing	Total performance income	Total performance costs	Total performance contribution
Cheesy Bingo	£ -	£ 3,075.00	100%	£ 2,136.91	£ 938.09	£ 3,253.66	£ 1,309.45	£ 1,944.21	£ 343.20	£ 6,328.66	£ 3,789.56	£ 2,539.10
Purple Zepellin	£ -	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
90's Rewind	£ -	£ 7,450.00	100%	£ 3,050.00	£ 4,400.00	£ 6,904.08	£ 2,766.03	£ 4,138.05	£ 460.46	£ 14,354.08	£ 6,276.49	£ 8,077.59
Film Club x 2	£ 300.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 312.66	£ 125.45	£ 187.21	£ -	£ 612.66	£ 125.45	£ 487.21
Jazz Club	£ -	£ 1,554.17	68%	£ 1,069.25	£ 484.92	£ 556.49	£ 223.81	£ 332.68	£ 90.80	£ 2,110.66	£ 1,383.86	£ 726.80
Comedy Club	£ -	£ 1,381.67	50%	£ 1,000.00	£ 381.67	£ 1,087.32	£ 438.55	£ 648.77	£ 131.12	£ 2,468.99	£ 1,569.67	£ 899.32
Roller Disco	£ 245.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 255.57	£ 110.43	£ 145.14	£ 51.48	£ 500.57	£ 161.91	£ 338.66
Money for Nothing	£ -	£ 4,205.00	95%	£ 2,500.00	£ 1,705.00	£ 1,896.83	£ 763.02	£ 1,133.81	£ 291.72	£ 6,101.83	£ 3,554.74	£ 2,547.09
Ratrace	£ -	£ 2,325.00	45%	£ 975.00	£ 1,350.00	£ 1,919.74	£ 769.32	£ 1,150.42	£ 297.44	£ 4,244.74	£ 2,041.76	£ 2,202.98
Maet Live	£ -	£ 2,520.00	58%	£ 1,629.26	£ 890.74	£ 1,638.66	£ 657.89	£ 980.77	£ 286.00	£ 4,158.66	£ 2,573.15	£ 1,585.51
Lunchtime Jazz	£ -	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 170.58	£ 68.76	£ 101.82	£ -	£ 170.58	£ 68.76	£ 101.82
Rock Choir x 4	£ 400.00	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 114.41	£ 45.76	£ 68.65	£ -	£ 514.41	£ 45.76	£ 468.65
Ceroc x 4	£ 1,139.20	£ -	n/a	£ -	£ -	£ 235.90	£ 95.27	£ 140.63	£ 45.04	£ 1,375.10	£ 140.31	£ 1,234.79
TOTALS FOR JUNE	£ 2,084.20	£ 22,510.84		£ 12,360.42	£ 10,150.42	£ 18,345.90	£ 7,373.74	£ 10,972.16	£ 1,997.26	£ 42,940.94	£ 21,731.42	£ 21,209.52
TOTALS	£ 6,087.40	£ 55,916.68		£ 34,831.60	£ 21,085.08	£ 34,467.95	£ 13,887.23	£ 20,580.72	£ 4,563.22	£ 96,472.03	£ 53,282.05	£ 43,189.98

SUBJECT: INVESTMENT AND CURRENT ACCOUNTS

Account balances for Fleet Town Council as at 30 June 2024

Account	Funds	Interest Rate	Comment
HSBC Current Bank Account, Account No: 61539272	£819,240.41		
HSBC Savings Account, Account No: 91620886	£302,086.69	2.00% Per annum	Interest paid into HSBC Savings account each month.
Nationwide Building Society, Business Instant Saver, Account No: 900041402	£836,936.63	3.00%	Interest paid into Nationwide current account. Business 18-month saver. Interest calculated daily, capitalised annually and added to the account on the anniversary date and upon maturity.
CCLA Investment Management Ltd, Public Sector Deposit Fund, Account No.: 0662920001	£2,200,000.00	5.33% Per annum	Interest paid into HSBC current account, monthly.
TOTAL	£4,158,263.70		

Please note:Interest received on 24 June 2024 into Nationwide account:

Nationwide £12,201.56

Interest received on 2 July 24 into HSBC account:

CCLA £9,408.08

Interest received on 21 June 24 into HSBC account:

HSBC Savings £507.15

Recommendation

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



Fleet Phoenix
 The Point Youth Centre
 Harlington Way
 Fleet
 Hampshire
 GU51 4BP
 01252 812 308
www.fleetphoenix.co.uk
 16th June 2024

Dear Fleet Town Council,

Fleet Phoenix would like to apply to the town council for a grant to cover our rent due to you for April 2024 to March 2025. This would be for our £1200 payment for the office and storeroom rent.

As with so many other organisations we are struggling to make ends meet with expenses that we are unable to apply for grants and funding for. Rent, Insurance, office expenses, Health & Safety and staff training etc. are not face-to-face work which the funders are not keen to pay for but are all essential to ensuring we have space and are legally compliant.

Fleet on paper is wealthy (but we all know that this is not the case) and we are told by national funders that we need to look locally for funding for these types of expenses. As an organisation we are always grateful and thankful for the continuing support of Fleet Town Council and urge you to consider our request.

Fleet phoenix client split at present is as follows:

Town	Number of Clients
Aldershot	24
Basingstoke	15
Blackwater	24
Bordon	1
Camberley	13
Church Crookham	254
Crookham Village	25
Elvetham Heath	63
Farnborough	82
Farnham	21
Fleet	472
Frimley	2
Hartley Wintney	21
Hook	27
Odiham	11

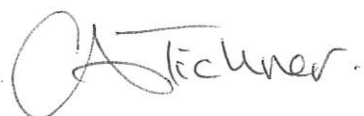
Other (further afield)	29
Unknown	193
Yateley	25
Zebon Copse	23

Other Parish council are now supporting and contributing to our services including, Hook, Church Crookham, Crookham Village, Elvetham Heath and Hampshire County Council are supporting our troubled families' work and sessional activities and Hart District Council have also been incredibly supportive with our targeted projects. Yes, there are some gaps, but we are working on this.

If you have any queries or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.
If you want to attend a Council meeting to discuss this, please tell me when and where.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,



Charlotte Tickner
Managing Director
Fleet Phoenix



Agenda and Minute Policy

Full Council Approved: February 2018, reviewed February 2021
Due for Review: February 2024.

1 Agenda

All agenda of the Council shall be clear, succinct and will enable the reader to appreciate what will be discussed at the Council meeting and when and where that meeting will take place.

All agenda will include Public Participation except for Establishment Committee.

The agenda will not include any other business as this can lead to illegal decisions. If Councillors wish to share information with colleagues on a matter that is not on the agenda they should ask the Chairman before the meeting if they can bring this information to the attention of the Councillors after the meeting has closed, but understand that no decisions can be taken on the matter.

The Agenda will aim to be published one week before the meeting is held, but not less than three working days.

2 Minutes

The Purpose of the Minutes is to record who attends and the legal decisions taken at a Council meeting.

For each item the details of any discussion or debate will not be recorded, detailed information will be recorded in the reports, but not in the minutes. The minutes will briefly record that the debate took place about a, b and c. Individuals will not be named.

The resolution will then record the decision of the Council on the matter; there is no need to record proposers and seconders or who voted in favour or against unless a recorded vote is requested.

Public Participation will record the name of the individual and the question asked or statement made in an abbreviated format. Statements will not be recorded.



Agenda and Minute Policy

Policy & Finance Approved: July 2024
Due for Review: July 2027

1 Agenda

All agenda of the Council shall be clear, succinct and will enable the reader to appreciate what will be discussed at the Council meeting and when and where that meeting will take place.

All agenda will include Public Participation except for Establishment Committee.

The agenda will not include any other business as this can lead to illegal decisions.

2 Minutes

The Minutes will record who attends and the legal decisions taken at a Council meeting.

Also refer to Agenda and Minute Procedures



Agenda and Minute Procedures

Policy & Finance Approved: July 2024
Due for Review: July 2027

1 Agenda

If Councillors wish to share information with colleagues on a matter that is not on the Agenda, they should ask the Chairman before the meeting if they can bring this information to the attention of the Councillors after the meeting has closed, but understand that no decisions can be taken on the matter.

The Agenda will aim to be published one week before the meeting is held, but not less than three working days.

2 Minutes

The Purpose of the Minutes is to record who attends and the legal decisions taken at a Council meeting.

For each item the details of any discussion or debate will not be recorded, detailed information will be recorded in the reports, but not in the minutes.

The resolution will then record the decision of the Council on the matter; there is no need to record proposers and seconders or who voted in favour or against unless a recorded vote is requested.

Public Participation will record the name of the individual and the question asked or statement made in an abbreviated format. Statements will not be recorded.

Also refer to Agenda and Minute Policy



Co-option Policy Procedure

Full Council Approved: November 2018 (Amended October 2020)
Due for Review: October 2023

Candidates wishing to apply for co-option should apply in writing demonstrating that they meet the statutory requirements as set out in Form 2 attached

The applicant must be a British subject, or a citizen of the Commonwealth or the European Union, be 18 years of age or over on the relevant date and additionally able to meet one of the following qualifications:

- a) be registered as a local government elector in the Parish of Fleet
- b) during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of co-option, occupied as owner or tenant, land or other premises in the Parish of Fleet
- c) the principal or only place of work during those twelve months has been in the Parish of Fleet
- d) during the whole of the twelve months preceding the date of co-option resided within 4.8 km of the Parish of Fleet.

Co-optees should be able to demonstrate by completion of Form 1

- A record of commitment to Fleet Town Area including support for the local community by voluntary or charitable actions
- Particular skills that would benefit the Council in the discharge of its public duty

In the event of more candidates coming forward than vacancies to be filled, Members shall select councillors by completion of ballot papers

When Virtual Council meetings are being held the co-option candidates will be asked to wait offline until voting has taken place and then return to hear the results.

When Council meetings are conducted virtually, the method used must ensure that each Members vote remains confidential.

Approved at Full Council on 7 November 2018, Review date November 2020.



Electricity supply on The Views Policy

RLA Approved: July 2014
Reviewed July 2021
Due for next Review: July 2024

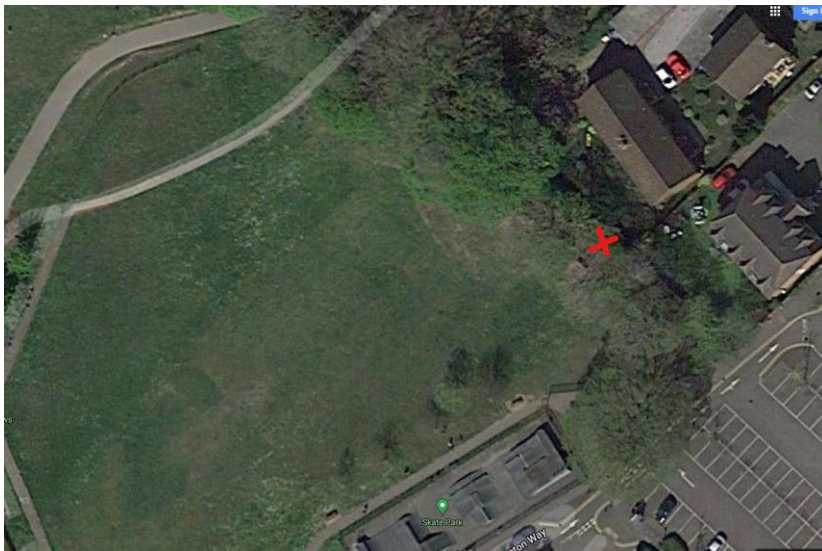
1. The Views Park, situated off Harlington Way, Fleet, is owned and managed by Fleet Town Council and its hire by outside bodies is subject to the Town Council's Open Air Civic Events Policy (see reference www.fleet-tc.gov.uk/Procedures_and_Policies.aspx)
2. A secured electricity supply is operational in the Views and this supply is managed by Fleet Town Council. This electricity supply can be provided to Town Council approved hirers and may be made available, at a charge, to commercial organisation, voluntary bodies and community groups who wish to hire the Views Park.
3. These hirers must first have obtained formal approval by the Council for the use of the Park by completing and submitting an Application for the Use of the Premises form.. This form will enable the hirer to request the provision of electricity as part of his/her requirements. It will also instruct the hirer to provide billing information to allow the Town Council to reclaim the cost of the electricity supplied, plus an administration charge*.
4. As part of its responsibility for services within the Park, the Town Council will ensure that the electricity supply is subject to an annual check by the responsible Utilities company (currently Southern Electric) and that it meets UK health and Safety standards.
6. In agreement with the hirer and prior to the commencement of the event, the Town Council will ensure that access to the electricity supply is made available to the hirer (i.e. that any equipment required to made the supply serviceable is provided in a timely manner)
7. Prior to the event taking place, the Town Council will take a meter reading (within 24 hours of the commencement, or in agreement with hirer)
8. Following the event, the Town Council will take a meter reading after the event (within 24 hours before, or in agreement with hirer)
9. Within 28 days of the event, the Town Council will invoice the hirer for the cost of the electricity used + VAT and administration charge.
10. Fleet Town Council will be responsible for re-securing the electricity supply following the event
11. The hirer will be responsible for ensuring that any electrical equipment connected to the supply has been PAT tested (copy of relevant certificate(s) to be attached with

the Application for the Use of the Premises form). The hirer will also provide a nominated person (s) who will be responsible for the number of connections to the electricity supply and the amount of power being drawn to ensure that the power supply does not get overloaded

12. The hirer will hold Personal Liability Insurance (PLI) and a copy of this Insurance must also be attached with the Application for the Use of the Premises form
13. The hirer will be responsible for ensuring that any wiring from the supply point to the electrical equipment is subject to critical health & safety measures to prevent danger and the risk of injury to any person. Regulations 3 to 6 of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 applies and is an absolute requirement in law for the protection of people including members of the public using the councils facility/premises/land.

*Notice 749 Local authorities and similar bodies April 2002 states that the supply of water, gas, electricity and steam are subject to VAT unless it can be shown that the authority (FTC) carry them out on such a small scale as to be negligible

Example: The Views Park Site map showing location of power point Box



Example: The Power point facility





Electricity Supply on The Views Procedure

RLA Approved: July 2014
Reviewed July 2024
Due for next Review: July 2027

Overview

The Views Park, located off Harlington Way, Fleet, is owned and managed by Fleet Town Council. The hire of the park by outside bodies is subject to the Town Council's Open Air Civic Events Policy.

This document outlines the procedures for managing and providing the electricity supply to approved hirers of The Views Park. The purpose of this document is to ensure the safe and efficient provision of electricity to hirers, ensuring compliance with health and safety standards.

1. Definitions

- **Hirer:** The individual or organization that has been approved to use The Views Park for an event.
- **Event:** The activity or series of activities taking place in The Views Park as approved by the Town Council.
- **PAT Testing:** Portable Appliance Testing to ensure electrical equipment is safe to use.
- **PLI:** Public Liability Insurance.

2. Application Process

To use the electricity supply, hirers must:

- a. Obtain formal approval from the Council by completing and submitting an Application for the Use of the Premises form.
- b. Request the provision of electricity as part of their application.
- c. Provide billing information to enable the Town Council to reclaim the cost of electricity supplied, plus an administration charge.

3. Annual Checks and Safety Standards

The Town Council ensures the electricity supply undergoes an annual check by the responsible utilities company and meets UK Health and Safety standards.

4. Access to Electricity Supply

- a. The Town Council will ensure access to the electricity supply is made available to the hirer before the event, providing any necessary equipment in a timely manner.
- b. Meter readings will be taken by the Town Council:
 - i. **Before the event:** Within 24 hours of the commencement, or as agreed with the hirer.
 - ii. **After the event:** Within 24 hours before the conclusion, or as agreed with the hirer.

5. Billing

Within 28 days after the event, the Town Council will invoice the hirer for the cost of the electricity used, plus VAT and the administration charge.

6. Post-Event Procedure

The Town Council will re-secure the electricity supply following the event.

7. Hirer Responsibilities

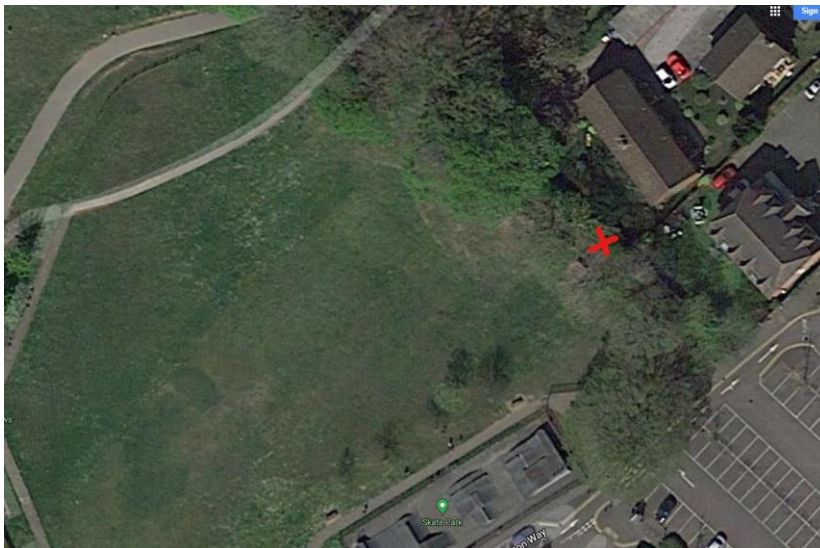
The hirer must ensure:

- a. All connected electrical equipment has been PAT tested, with certificates attached to the application form.
- b. A nominated person is responsible for the number of connections to the electricity supply and the amount of power being drawn, preventing overloads.
- c. Personal Liability Insurance (PLI) is held, with a copy attached to the application form.
- d. Wiring from the supply point to the electrical equipment adheres to critical health and safety measures, preventing danger and injury risks.
- e. Compliance with Regulations 3 to 6 of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, which are mandatory for protecting people, including the public using the council's facilities.

Note: Per Notice 749 Local Authorities and Similar Bodies (April 2002), the supply of water, gas, electricity, and steam is subject to VAT unless provided on a negligible scale by the authority.

For more information, refer to Fleet Town Council's Open Air Civic Events Policy at www.fleet-tc.gov.uk/Procedures_and_Policies.aspx.

Example: The Views Park Site map showing location of power point Box



Example: The Power point facility





Gift and Hospitality Policy

Full Council Approved: December 2019
Due for Review: February 2021, further review February 2023.

1. Purpose

There is no definitive guidance in the Local Government Act 1972, governing the provision and receipt of hospitality however under the Bribery Act 2010, it is a criminal offence for employees in an official capacity to accept any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for:

- doing or not doing anything; or
- showing favour or disfavour to any person

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all members and staff of Fleet Town Council when considering whether to accept gifts or hospitality from individuals or organisations and to protect staff/councillors from allegations of impropriety.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors, whether co-opted or elected, and to all Employees, including those with temporary contracts, or students.

3. Basic Principles

- All officers and those working on behalf of the Council (including Councillors) are expected to refuse the offer of inappropriate and disproportionate gifts and hospitality made in relation to their role in the Council. ~~unless there are compelling reasons or exceptional circumstances for doing so.~~
- Individuals are responsible for deciding whether an offer of a gift or hospitality is “inappropriate and/or disproportionate” and could have the potential to be interpreted as recompense, inducement or endorsement.

- It is the responsibility of the officer/councillor to refuse such offers and to report any possible conflict of interest and in cases where you believe that the Council may be compromised.
- Officers/councillors must never accept monetary gifts of any kind, whether in the form of cash or cheques.
- Accepting a gift or hospitality that does not comply with this policy will breach the code of conduct and may result in disciplinary action.
- Gifts or hospitality must not be accepted where it might be perceived to influence a decision in respect of purchasing goods or services, awarding contracts, or in the discharge of any other aspect of the Council's business.
- It is a criminal offence for officers/councillors to corruptly receive any gift, loan, fee, reward or advantage for doing, or not doing anything, or showing favour, or disfavour, to any person in their official capacity. In no circumstances should any statement ever be made in return for a personal gift, or money.
- It is expressly prohibited for an officer/councillor to accept any gift or hospitality from an organisation if the officer is actively involved in a tender process with the organisation on behalf of the Council. This prohibition commences at the point that an invitation to tender is published and extends to a period of three months after a contract has been awarded. For reasons of integrity and transparency, the principle of receipt of gifts or hospitality extends to the spouse, partner or immediate family of the officer/councillor.

4. Registration and Approval of Gifts and Hospitality

- Officers and councillors must follow the proper procedure for the registration and approval of offers of gifts and hospitality. If there is any doubt about the acceptance of a gift or offer of hospitality, the individual is responsible for discussing this with the Executive Officer.
- Offers of gifts and hospitality with a value of £25 or less do not need approval ~~or to be recorded in the register~~ unless it is considered that there are good reasons for doing so. If there is any doubt whether an item falls within the definition of a gift or hospitality and/or is acceptable then this can be checked with the Executive Officer.

- Any gifts and hospitality with a value of £25 or more that have been offered, whether they have been accepted, declined or accepted and donated to charity, must still be registered.
- Gifts or hospitality with a value of £25 or more must be approved by the Executive Officer. They must be authorised and recorded in advance of receipt. ~~Where this is not possible, it should be recorded and authorised within seven days of the receipt.~~
- Where an officer/councillor receives a series of gifts or hospitality from the same individual or organisation in one year with a cumulative value of £100 or over, these too must be registered.
- No officer/councillor should continue to accept gifts or hospitality after the cumulative value of items reached in a single financial year reaches £200 or more. In such circumstances it must be registered that the gift or hospitality has been declined for this reason.
- Items where a value is not known should be assumed to be worth a notional cost of £50 and be recorded on this basis in calculating the cumulative total received over the financial year.
- The gift register is kept as a hard copy in the Council Offices however it is open to inspection by internal and external auditors and also the public upon request.

5. **Town Council Awards**

In recognition of the unpaid service given by local people as Town Councillors on completion of service a token gift up to a maximum value of **£100** may be given as a memento.

6. **Chairmen/Women**

The Town Council recognises the efforts put in by a Chairperson during their term of office. To recognise this commitment, the Chairperson's name is added to the Roll of Honour.

7. **Employees Leaving the Council**

Employees leaving the Council may receive a small gift up to the value of **£50**, and a celebratory tea/cake may be purchased in recognition of the value of the employees work for the council.

8. Funerals

As a mark of respect the Town Council purchases a wreath or gives a donation up to the value of **£100** for past and present Councillors and staff, spouses of Councillors and staff, and prominent members of the community for their funerals.

9. Gifts to Employees/Members

As a general rule Members and Employees should always refuse, tactfully, all such offers from organisations or persons who do, or might provide work, goods or services to the Town Council, or who might require policy decisions to be taken by the Council on matters affecting them personally. Exceptions from this rule would be small promotional items, cups of tea, and gifts of no significant pecuniary value to another party as long as the value is less than £25. In any event, any gift found to be acceptable must be registered in the official gift register.

10. Entertainment and Hospitality

Minor catering (Tea, coffee, biscuits, snacks, soft drinks, and bottled water) may be accepted by Members and Employees.

Major catering (sit-down meals, buffets etc, in house or in other establishments) received from any person in connection with Council Business, must be disclosed to council. Such gifts must also be registered in the gift register.

11. Official Gifts

Modest gifts may be given to individuals who have performed in some sort of service for the Council, e.g. minor items such as pens for students on work experience, or for volunteers.

A small gift of no significant pecuniary value may be given to children on Sporting or Recreational activities, to foster a sense of pride in achievements.

I confirm that I have read and understood the policy.

Dated: _____.

Signature of employee: _____



Gifts and Hospitality Policy

Policy & Finance Approved: July 2024

Due for Review: July 2027

Purpose

There is no definitive guidance in the Local Government Act 1972 governing the provision and receipt of hospitality. However, under the Bribery Act 2010, it is a criminal offence for employees in an official capacity to accept any gift or consideration as an inducement or reward for:

- Doing or not doing anything; or
- Showing favour or disfavour to any person

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to all members and staff of Fleet Town Council on whether to accept gifts or hospitality from individuals or organisations and to protect staff/councillors from allegations of impropriety.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors, whether co-opted or elected, and to all Employees, including those with temporary contracts or students.

3. Basic Principles

- All officers and those working on behalf of the Council (including Councillors) are expected to refuse inappropriate and disproportionate gifts and hospitality made in relation to their role in the Council.
- Individuals must decide if an offer of a gift or hospitality is “inappropriate and/or disproportionate” and could be seen as recompense, inducement, or endorsement.
- Officers/councillors are responsible for refusing such offers, reporting possible conflicts of interest, and ensuring the Council's integrity is not compromised.
- Officers/councillors must never accept monetary gifts of any kind.

- Accepting non-compliant gifts or hospitality will breach the code of conduct and may result in disciplinary action.
- Gifts or hospitality must not be accepted where it might be perceived to influence Council decisions.
- It is a criminal offence for officers/councillors to corruptly receive any gift, loan, fee, reward, or advantage.
- Officers/councillors must not accept any gift or hospitality from an organization if they are involved in a tender process with that organization, extending to a period of three months post-contract award. This extends to the spouse, partner, or immediate family.

Also refer to Gifts and Hospitality Procedures



Gifts and Hospitality Procedure

Policy & Finance Approved: July 2024

Due for Review: July 2027

1. Registration and Approval of Gifts and Hospitality

- Follow proper procedures for registration and approval of gifts/hospitality. Discuss any doubts with the Executive Officer.
- Gifts/hospitality valued at £25 or less do not need approval unless there are good reasons to do so. Check with the Executive Officer if unsure.
- Gifts/hospitality valued at £25 or more must be registered, whether accepted, declined, or donated to charity.
- Approval by the Executive Officer is required for gifts/hospitality valued at £25 or more, and they must be recorded in advance of receipt.
- Register gifts/hospitality from the same individual/organization with a cumulative value of £100 or more within one year.
- Refuse gifts/hospitality if the cumulative value reaches £200 in a single financial year and register the refusal.
- Assume unknown value items to be worth £50 for cumulative total calculations.

2. Town Council Awards

In recognition of unpaid service by Town Councillors, a token gift up to £100 may be given as a memento upon completion of service.

3. Chairmen/Women

The Chairperson's efforts are recognised by adding their name to the Roll of Honour.

4. Employees Leaving the Council

Employees leaving the Council may receive a small gift up to £50 and a celebratory tea/cake in recognition of their work.

5. Funerals

As a mark of respect, the Town Council may purchase a wreath or give a donation up to £100 for funerals of past and present Councillors, staff, spouses, and prominent community members.

6. Gifts to Employees/Members

Members and Employees should tactfully refuse gifts from individuals/organizations providing work, goods, or services to the Council, or requiring policy decisions by the Council.

Exceptions include small promotional items, cups of tea, and gifts of insignificant pecuniary value, under £25. These must still be registered.

7. Entertainment and Hospitality

Minor catering (tea, coffee, biscuits, snacks, soft drinks, bottled water) may be accepted by Members and Employees.

Major catering (sit-down meals, buffets) must be disclosed to the council and registered.

8. Official Gifts

Modest gifts may be given for services rendered to the Council, e.g., minor items for students on work experience or volunteers, and small gifts to children in sporting or recreational activities.

9. Audit and Transparency

The gift register is kept as a hard copy in the Council Offices, open to inspection by internal and external auditors and the public upon request.

Also refer to Gifts and Hospitality Policy



Media Policy

Agreed at Policy and Finance Committee: July 2018
Reviewed: July 2021
Due for Review: July 2024

Introduction

1. Fleet Town Council (“the Council”) is committed to the provision of accurate information about its governance, decisions and activities. Where this information is not available via the Council’s publication scheme, please contact the Town Clerk’s office
2. The Council shall, where possible, co-operate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form including use of the internet (“the media”).
3. This policy explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with the legal requirements and restrictions that apply.

Legal requirements and restrictions

4. This policy is subject to the Council’s obligations which are set out in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, other legislation which may apply and the Council’s standing orders and financial regulations. The Council’s financial regulations and relevant standing orders referenced in this policy are available via the Council’s publication scheme.
5. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information the disclosure of which is prohibited by law. The Council cannot disclose information if this is prohibited under the terms of a court order, by legislation, the Council’s standing orders, under contract or by common law.
Councillors are subject to additional restrictions about the disclosure of confidential information which arise from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, a copy of which is available via the Council’s publication scheme.

Meetings

6. A meeting of the Council and its committees is open to the public unless the meeting resolves to exclude them because their presence at the meeting is prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business or other special reason(s) stated in the resolution. In accordance with the Council's standing orders, persons may be required to leave a meeting of the Council and its committees, if their disorderly behaviour obstructs the business of the meeting.

7. Where a meeting of the Council and its committees include an opportunity for public participation, members of the media may speak and ask questions. Public and media participation is regulated by the Council's standing orders.

8. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a meeting of the Council and its committees (which includes e.g. using a mobile phone or tablet, recording for a TV/radio broadcast, providing commentary on blogs, web forums, or social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) which enable a person not at the meeting to see, hear or be given commentary about the meeting is permitted unless (i) the meeting has resolved to hold all or part of the meeting without the public present or (ii) such activities disrupt the proceedings or (iii) paragraphs 9 and 10 below apply.

9. The photographing, recording, filming or other reporting of a child or vulnerable adult at a Council or committee meeting is not permitted unless an adult responsible for them has given permission.

10. Oral reporting or commentary about a Council or committee meeting by a person who is present at the meeting is not permitted.

11. The Council shall, as far as it is practicable, provide reasonable facilities for anyone taking a report of a Council or committee meeting and for telephoning their report at their own expense.

12. The Council's standing orders will confirm if attendance by the public, their participation, photographing, recording, filming or other reporting is permitted at a meeting of a sub-committee.

Other communications with the media

13. This policy does not seek to regulate councillors in their private capacity.

14. The Council's communications with the media seek to represent the corporate position and views of the Council. If the views of councillors are different to the Council's corporate position and views, they will make this clear.

15. The Council's Clerk may contact the media if the Council wants to provide information, a statement or other material about the Council.

16. Subject to the obligations on councillors not to disclose information referred to in paragraph 5 above and not to misrepresent the Council's position, councillors are free to communicate their position and views.



Media Policy

Approved at Policy and Finance Committee: July 2024
Due for Review: July 2027

Introduction

1. Fleet Town Council (“the Council”) is committed to providing accurate information about its governance, decisions, and activities. Where this information is not available via the Council’s publication scheme, please contact the Town Clerk’s office.
2. The Council shall, where possible, cooperate with those whose work involves gathering material for publication in any form, including the internet (“the media”).
3. This policy explains how the Council may work with the media to meet the above objectives in accordance with legal requirements and restrictions.

Legal Requirements and Restrictions

4. This policy is subject to the Council’s obligations set out in various laws, including the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1986, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998, and other applicable legislation, as well as the Council’s standing orders and financial regulations. Relevant documents are available via the Council’s publication scheme.
5. The Council cannot disclose confidential information or information prohibited by law. This includes information restricted by court order, legislation, the Council’s standing orders, contracts, or common law. Councillors have additional restrictions from the code of conduct, available via the Council’s publication scheme.

Other Communications with the Media

6. This policy does not seek to regulate councillors in their private capacity.
7. The Council’s communications with the media aim to represent the corporate position and views of the Council. If councillors’ views differ from the Council’s corporate position, they will clarify this.
8. The Council’s Executive Officer may contact the media to provide information, statements, or other material about the Council.
9. Subject to the obligations not to disclose certain information and not to misrepresent the Council’s position, councillors are free to communicate their views.

Also refer to Media Procedures

Adopted by P&F Cttee 17 July 2024, due for review July 2027



Media Procedure

Approved at Policy and Finance Committee: July 2024
Due for Review: July 2027

Meetings

1. Meetings of the Council and its committees are open to the public unless resolved otherwise due to the confidential nature of the business or other special reasons. Disorderly behaviour can result in removal from the meeting.
2. Where meetings include public participation, members of the media may speak and ask questions, regulated by the Council's standing orders.
3. Photographing, recording, filming, or other reporting of meetings is permitted unless:
 - The meeting resolves to exclude the public.
 - Such activities disrupt proceedings.
 - Paragraphs 4 and 5 apply.
4. Photographing, recording, filming, or other reporting of a child or vulnerable adult is not permitted without permission from a responsible adult.
5. Oral reporting or commentary about a meeting by someone present is not permitted.
6. The Council will provide reasonable facilities for media representatives to report on meetings, including telephoning their report at their own expense.
7. The Council's standing orders will specify if public attendance, participation, photographing, recording, filming, or other reporting is permitted at sub-committee meetings.

Audit and Transparency

The Council is committed to transparency and accountability. As part of this commitment, the Council's standing orders, financial regulations, and other relevant documents are available via the Council's publication scheme. These documents are accessible for inspection by internal and external auditors as well as the public upon request.

For ease of access, many of these documents can also be found on the Council's website.

For further assistance or to request specific documents, please contact the Fleet Town Council office.

Also refer to Media Policy

Adopted by P&F Cttee 17 July 2024, due for review July 2027

13. **BUDGET PREPARATION 2025/26**

Key Dates

- 16 October 2024 – Policy & Finance – First Draft
- 4 December 2024 – Full Council – Approve final budget

Members may decide to reconvene the Budget Working Group to address some of the issues raised below. In this case, dates for the Working Group will need to be set.

2025/26 Budget Issues

1. Harlington Income

Income levels for The Harlington need to be set. Decisions about ticket pricing increases also needs to be determined.

Timeline for The Harlington renovation project suggests that it should be business as usual for 2025 but we may need to start factoring in loss of income from 2026.

2. Staffing Costs

Factors to take into account when determining the salary costs for 2025/26 include:

- The Consumer Price Index in the 12 months to May 2024 was 2.8% and is starting to trend downwards. The UK RPI is currently 3.3%.
- The minimum wage rose to 9.8% to £11.44 an hour from 1 April 2024. With this increase, the (then) Government's target for the National Living Wage to reach two-thirds of the median earnings was achieved. However, in Labour's election manifesto they said they would turn the minimum wage into a real living wage that takes cost of living into account and that they would scrap age bands.
- Bank of England expects private sector pay awards to average 5.5 per cent in 2024.

3. Pension Liability

The staff member who belongs to the LGPS Pension scheme where the liability applies will reach retirement age in November 2025. This means the pension liability of £70,000 will fall due at that point unless another staff member joins the scheme, thus deferring the liability.

Should the option of having another staff member join the scheme, the position that would create the least number of problems would be the Executive Officer

role. The employer's contribution rate for the LGPS scheme is currently 21.4% (as opposed to the 10% currently paid for the Executive Officer role). This represents an increase of £6,840 per annum and would be an ongoing increase.

The Ear Marked Reserve for this pension liability currently sits at £40,000. A one-off transfer of £30,000 would be required in 2025/26 to meet the obligation.

4. Training Costs

The training budget was recently reduced based on the assumption that the numerous courses included in the Bright HR subscription would suffice for our training needs. However, it has become evident that these courses are generic and do not cover the industry-specific training required by our staff. During the latest performance appraisal round, several staff members requested training that is not included in the Bright HR package.

To address these challenges, the Executive Officer recommends the following:

- Create a comprehensive training matrix for each role within the organization. This matrix should outline mandatory training requirements and the methods for delivering this training.
- Based on the training matrix, determine the sufficient level of funding required to meet the training needs of all staff. This will ensure that the training budget is aligned with the actual needs of the organization.

5. Grounds Maintenance

The Grounds Maintenance contract has been extended several times over the years. While it is possible to extend it once more, it may be in the Council's best interest to review the Schedule of Works and retender the contract. This review could ensure that the services provided meet current needs and standards.

However, it is important to note that retendering the contract carries the risk of the contract value increasing more than the Retail Price Index (RPI).

6. Tree Works

In the 2024/25 budget, the allocation for tree surgery was increased based on historical expenditure and previous tree survey reports. During the last budget review, it was recommended that the tree surgery estimates be further refined once the tree survey, scheduled for November 2023, was completed.

Additionally, the Facilities and Open Spaces Manager (FOSM) requested a separate budget for tree planting. While tree works are categorized under Health and Safety, tree planting is part of the Council's greening initiatives. Notably, tree planting can be as costly as tree surgery, given the high expense of established trees.

7. Playground Maintenance

Last year's budget round included an estimate for high-risk repairs in 2024. These repairs should bring the playground maintenance up to date and ensure the facilities remain in good order.

The FOSM and Executive Officer are in the process of developing a maintenance plan for Playgrounds, but this may not be ready in time for the 2025/26 budget.

8. Utility Costs

New research predicts a decrease in energy costs for business in 2024 primarily due to falling wholesale energy prices. This is according to Drax Energy Solutions' latest Third Party Costs (TPCs) Guide, which cites the decline in wholesale prices as the biggest factor.

Currently, The Harlington is operating with only two out of its five boilers functional, posing a significant risk of total failure at any moment. In the event of such a failure, it is crucial for the Council to have a contingency plan in place, complete with associated costs, to ensure continued operation and service.

9. General Reserve

As with any financial entity, it is essential that authorities have sufficient reserves (general and earmarked) to finance both their day-to-day operations and future plans. All reserves should be reviewed and justified regularly (i.e. at least annually). It is good practice to transparently publish both the level and rationale of all reserves.

The general reserve of an authority comprises its cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances. The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority's general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure. Fleet Town Council's net revenue expenditure is currently £671,429 which means the General Reserve should be between £167,857 and £671,429. It currently sits at £441,727 which is well within the acceptable range.

10. Playground Reserve

Fleet Town Council currently maintains seven playgrounds: Ancells Farm, Basingbourne, Calthorpe, The Views, and two at Edenbrook. Replacing a single piece of play equipment can cost upwards of £5,000, while a complete playground replacement can exceed £100,000. Although funding is often available for purchasing new equipment, opportunities to fund the replacement of existing equipment or entire playgrounds are limited. This necessitates the Council to

allocate funds proactively. Instead of incurring a significant financial burden all at once, it is prudent to continually build a playground replacement fund.

As noted in point 7, a maintenance plan for playgrounds is being developed. This plan will provide timeframes for when each playground may need to be replaced, enabling the Council to establish a reserve fund accordingly.

Members are asked to consider the above and:

- 1. Determine whether there are any other issues that need to be considered in the 2025/26 budget.**
- 2. Determine what issues impacting the 2025/26 budget require further work and decide what information they require to address those issues.**
- 3. Determine whether they wish to reconvene the Budget Working Group, and if so, set some meeting dates.**