

CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
PERSONNEL, FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD AT 7.00 PM ON
13TH NOVEMBER 2023 AT SESSIONS HOUSE, LYNN ROAD, ELY

PRESENT: Mrs T Coulson – Clerk to the Council

Cllr Ní Dhónaill

Cllr S Austen

Cllr P Gardner

Cllr M Banyard

Cllr C Phillips

Cllr R Denness

Cllr R Moss-Eccardt

Cllr R Morgan

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Pitt and Cllr Ward. In the Chairman's absence the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Ní Dhónaill chaired the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST PERSONNEL, FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING (HELD ON THE 9TH SEPTEMBER 2023) & MATTERS ARISING

Minutes of the last Personnel, Finance and Governance Committee meeting held on the 9th September 2023, were agreed and signed by the Vice-Chairman, as a true record, subject to the addition of Cllr Denness as present. Pages PFG 146, 147 and 148 refer. Matters Arising:- Page 147, item 14 – the Clerk requested confirmation on two of the applications that did not qualify under the grants criteria. It was agreed to inform one that under the Council's new General Power of Competence they could request CIL funding for their project. The other would be carried over to next year as they did not currently have a bank account in place. Councillors confirmed that the grant process was now closed for this financial year so no further applications would be accepted. The Clerk will inform any present and future applicants of this and that they will have to wait until the next financial year.

4. BUDGET UPDATE AND SETTING OF BUDGET FOR 2024/25

The budget updates up to the 31.10.23 were noted. There were no significant variances that councillors had concerns with. The proposed budget was discussed at great length and the explanations for the budget headings considered. Cllr Ní Dhónaill proposed the budget be approved, with a precept for 2024/25 of £798,600. This was seconded by Cllr Austin and unanimously agreed. This will be recommended to the next Full Council for approval. This will be a 7.18% increase on a Council tax band D property and will equate to an increase of approximately 14p per week.

5. UPDATE FROM THE GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

No update as the Working Group had not meet.

6. UPDATE FROM THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN WORKING GROUP

Cllr Ní Dhónaill presented notes of the meeting held on the 10th October 2023, which were accepted and noted. It was hoped to have village forums to engage with these parishioners. The Clerk will make contact with a representative from Chettisham to help facilitate a meeting with Chettisham residents and the North Ward councillors.

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COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
29th January 2024

7. UPDATE FROM CIL SUB-COMMITTEE AND TO RECEIVE CIL EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS UPDATE

No update as the Sub-Committee had not met, due to no requests having been received. The CIL expenditure analysis update, up to the 31st October was noted.

8. UPDATE FROM THE INCLUSIVITY WORKING GROUP

Cllr Ní Dhónaill presented notes of a meeting held on the 1st November 2023, which were noted and approved. It was agreed the Council would join the White Ribbon Campaign as a supporter organisation at a cost of £150. This campaign focuses on violence by men and boys against women and girls. A press release would be issued to this effect. It was agreed to budget for EDI training for councillors for next year. The Working Group would also be looking at how the Council can engage in history/awareness months in 2024. This could include – LGBTQ History Month (Feb); Local and Community History Month (May); Mental Health Awareness Month (May); Disability Pride Month (July) and Black History Month (October). Cllr Phillips will lead this.

9. UPDATE FROM THE NORTH ELY HUB AND COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP

No update as the Working Group had not met.

10. UPDATE FROM THE YOUTH LEAD

Cllr Gardner informed councillors the County Council had revamped their national citizen service for years 11 and 12 and there was a group in Ely. There are plans to engage with them to inform them what the Youth Council Youth Forum might look like. This will be done February next year and they will be asked as to what they like about the play areas in Ely. Officers from CCC and ECDC are talking to Ely College with regard to the Underpass project. As funds had been allocated in next year's budget for the Youth Forum it was agreed that it was not necessary to apply to the Community Reach Fund for a grant.

11. TO RECEIVE UPDATE FROM CLLR PITT WITH REGARD TO THE REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCES FOR WORKING GROUPS

This item was deferred to the next meeting as Cllr Pitt was not present to give an update.

12. UPDATE FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS & PR WORKING GROUP

Cllr Moss-Eccardt presented notes of a meeting held on the 18th October 2023, which were noted and approved. It was agreed to budget for a new Council website for next year. The Clerk reiterated that it was important to involve the Civic and Corporate Services Officer as they were responsible for maintaining and updating the website. The views of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk should also be sought. Cllr Moss-Eccardt proposed that the Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy be amended to remove reference to Twitter as the Council does not have a Twitter account. Facebook should only be used for Council business and would be managed by the Chairman/Vice-Chairman and Clerk only. An exception to this would be if a councillor was attending an event in an official capacity, and then could live post or follow up on this, but would need access approved before the event and for the duration only. This was seconded by Cllr Austen and unanimously approved.

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13. TO CONSIDER REVISED STANDING ORDERS AS AGREED AT FULL COUNCIL ON 30TH OCTOBER 2023 RE MAYOR BEING EX-OFFICIO MEMBER OF COMMITTEES AND AMBASSADORS

The Clerk had drafted revised standing orders with regard to decisions made at the Full Council meeting on the 30th October. The three standing orders were discussed, with one being amended. Cllr Ní Dhónaill proposed these be considered at the next Full Council meeting for approval and adoption. This was seconded by Cllr Moss-Eccardt and unanimously approved. It was also agreed that each Committee, at their next meeting would have an agenda item to discuss the Working Groups that report to it. They must consider if the Working Group is still necessary and whether the number of members is correct.

Cllrs Banyard and Denness left the meeting at 8.15 pm.

14. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CLERK WITH REGARD TO THE COUNCIL'S RESERVES, THE COUNCIL'S INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND OPTIONS FOR INVESTMENT

Councillors considered the update from the Clerk and options for investment. It was unanimously agreed the Clerk should prepare a report for the next Full Council meeting for possible investment with CCLA. This would show the risk, returns and amount to be invested. It was also agreed the Investment Strategy would be revised if this was required.

15. TO NOTE THE INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORTS FROM HER FIRST VISIT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/2024

Councillors noted the Internal Auditor's reports from her first visit for the financial year 2023/4. These were for Sessions House, the Maltings and Oliver Cromwell's. Councillors thanked staff for all their hard work in achieving such good reports.

16. HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

There were no health and safety issues to report.

17. PERSONNEL ISSUES

Councillors unanimously agreed the Clerk should communicate with the Town Crier with regard to the Council's expectations of the role and events to be attended. The contract will be reviewed in a year's time. Councillors noted the Local Government Service Pay Agreement for 2023.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 29th January 2024 at 7.00 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

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COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN
29th January 2024