

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 9th MAY, 2017
IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, LEDBURY**

PRESENT: Councillors: K Francis - Vice Chairman
R Barnes M Eager
E Fieldhouse A Manns
N Morris J Simpson
A Warmington

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs K Mitchell, Clerk to the Council
Cllrs E Harvey, A Harrison
1 member of the public

F.46 – 05.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs N Shields and J Roberts.

F.47 – 05.17 INTERESTS

None declared at this point in the meeting.

F.48 – 05.17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No matters were raised.

F.49 – 05.17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 23rd March, 2017 copies having been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record.

F.50 – 05.17 FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Internal Audit

- a) Members considered the content of the Interim Internal Audit Report 2016-17, copies having been circulated.

The internal auditor had concluded that, on the basis of the programme of work undertaken, the Council had maintained adequate and effective internal control arrangements during the year to date.

The following recommendation was identified as an improvement to the Council's internal control:

'The Minutes of Council meetings where grants are approved for payment should identify the relevant powers relied on for their approval in order that members may effectively demonstrate their acknowledgement of compliance with extant legislation.'

RESOLVED: That the report be approved and adopted.

b) Review of the effectiveness of the system of Internal Audit

Members reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit, as detailed in the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2017, and completed a checklist relating to compliance with standards and overall effectiveness.

Part 1 - Meeting Standards

Members considered sections 1-5 and

RESOLVED: To answer YES to all parts.

The Clerk was requested to update the dates contained within Part 1 – Meeting Standards and that the amended section be reviewed at the next meeting.

Referring to item 4. Relationships, it was

RESOLVED: That, following the conclusion of the operational review, the Council look at areas for development and do more to encourage members to undertake training.

Part 2 - Characteristics of Effectiveness

Members considered items 1-7 and

RESOLVED: To answer YES to all parts.

RESOLVED: That having reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal audit, the Town Council be recommended to confirm that an effective system of internal audit is in place.

c) Consideration of any comments from the internal auditor to enable preparation of draft accounts for the year ended 31st March 2017.

The Clerk advised that the internal auditor's final update for the year ended 31st March 2017 had been received following his visit on the previous day and that he had signed off the Internal Audit section of the Annual Return confirming that all internal control objectives had been met.

The final update report will be presented to the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: That this be noted.

2. External Audit

a) Audit for the year ended 31st March 2016

Copies of the Certified Annual Return and External Auditor certificate and opinion had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. It was confirmed that this was the final report for the year ended 31st March 2016, and that the accounts had been signed off on 29th March 2017.

Matters reported:

- i. An objection had been received from an elector which had resulted in additional work and fees.
- ii. Section 1 Annual Governance Statement. Due to the awaited outcome of Code of Conduct complaints the external auditor had been unable to gain sufficient assurance over the 'Yes' responses to assertions 3 and 8 of the Annual Return.

Cllr Barnes commented that the Code of Conduct complaints had not happened until after the year being audited and therefore were not applicable to the report. The Council had only done what it had a legal power to do and had complied with proper practices in doing so.

Other matters not affecting the Auditor's opinion:

- i. Notice period for the exercise of Public Rights for the 2014/15 Annual Return - the Clerk advised that the incorrect date on the notice was due to an administrative error.
- ii. Risk Assessment – The Clerk advised that the risk register for the year ended 31st March 2016 had been updated and subsequently adopted by Full Council on 25th February 2016.

RESOLVED: That the Certified Annual Return and External Auditor certificate and opinion for the year ended 31st March 2016 be received and noted.

b) Audit for the year ended 31st March 2017 – intermediate review

The Town Council is advised that the Annual Return must be completed and submitted to the External Auditor by 16th June 2017.

Members noted information required for the intermediate review 2016/17.

Completion of section 1 – Annual Governance Statement and Section 2 Accounting Statements will be considered at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: That this be noted.

3. Invoices for payment.

Members considered a list of invoices for payment, copies having been circulated. (Schedule to be lodged with the Minutes).

Referring to the payment to BT for the public telephone at the train station, the clerk was requested to obtain usage figures for future consideration.

RESOLVED: That the invoices be approved for payment.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm

Chairman

Date