



CHIRK TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF Y WAUN

REPORT OF FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD 22nd JUNE 2020 – 6PM

Present

Cllrs Mr Brian Colley (BC) Chairman, Mrs Jackie Allen (JA), Mr Gareth Baines (GB),
Mr Terry Evans (TE), Chris Burgoyne (CB).
Mrs Karen Brown (KB), Clerk to the Council.

1. Apologies.

Cllrs. Mrs Sarah Williams and Mr Mark Holmes.

2. Declaration of Interest.

None declared.

3. Community Agent Scheme – Contract Extension

The Clerk reported that the Service Level Agreement for the 2020/21 has been received and all contracts should be agreed by Council, but due to lockdown the Clerk has signed the 35 page contract and is seeking retrospective approval. Members asked if any of the terms and conditions had changed. The Clerk confirmed all contract information remained as for the previous year. The Finance Committee was happy that the SLA contract was signed as this was part of the budget setting process.

Questions were raised about the employment contract of the Community Agent. The Clerk confirmed that the Community Agent is employed by Chirk Town Council.

The Clerk reported that the future of the Community Agent post 2021 was in the early stages of being looked at by Wrexham Council. A wide range of options had been proposed and these will be narrowed down before formal consultation is undertaken. One of the options is to increase the scope of the role to include 18 year and over (currently over 50's). The Committee discussed this potential increase in residents requiring support. JA stated that mental health problems in the over 18's will be a Health Board priority next year. It was agreed that this matter will be considered by the Staffing Committee in due course.

4. Financial Regulations

The Clerk explained that the Financial Regulations should have been reviewed in March 2020 to meet the annual review/approval. However due to lockdown, there were no meetings between March and May. The Council agreed to start Council meetings remotely from June and therefore this was the first opportunity to review these documents.

A) Internal Controls

The document was reviewed. It was agreed that:-

Item 8 – Wages/Salaries instruction would be amended to state: 'The Clerk [insert: or alternatively a payroll bureau] will work out the pay due to employees in accordance with the agreed pay scales' and also add 'work towards all employees being paid on the same day'.

Item 10 – Payments will also have the following words inserted 'The clerk shall present invoices to the Council for approval of payment [insert: retrospectively in some cases].

B) Budget Control Procedures

Reviewed and agreed.

C) Procurement /Contract Procedures

Items 1 and 2 were agreed to keep the same. However item 3 for goods or services valued between £5,000 to £24,999 would have the word 'obtaining' three estimates replaced with 'seeking' three estimates.

D) Risk Assessment

The Committee agreed the Financial Risk Assessment. CB stated that following the One Voice Wales finance training session the Committee would work towards updating the risk assessment with a weighted risk score system. The Clerk confirmed that this was part of this year's agreed priorities to progress.

E) Annual Investment Strategy

Reviewed and agreed.

The Committee agreed subject to the above minor amendments to recommend to Council the approval of the Financial Regulations (including sections a-e).

BC highlighted the fact that the Finance Committee does not have delegated powers to make decisions or approve documents and as such there will be a lot of duplication in the Council meeting. The new model Financial Regulations (still to be adopted) will this delegation and therefore the Committee seeks the Council approval.

5. Earmarked Reserves at 31st March 2020

The Committee reviewed the earmarked reserves and went through each movement in balance. Members asked about the Youth Club reserve. JA gave background to this long standing amount. TE felt that this should be spent on something for the youth.

The Finance Committee recommended the Council approve the Earmarked Reserves.

6. Asset Register at 31st March 2020

The Clerk highlighted the additions to this year's asset register. A discussion took place relating to the valuation of assets, depreciation and insurance cover values.

Action: Clerk to ensure all assets are covered appropriately in the insurance policy.

7. Presentation of 2019/20 Income & Expenditure Accounts for year ending 31/03/2020 & supporting documents

KB presented the income and expenditure and balance sheet for year ending 31/03/2020. There were no questions relating to income. Members queried what aspects of expenditure was included in certain headings which was explained.

Members felt that going forward there needed to be clearer forecasting and analysis of certain elements e.g. Parish Hall room hire and individual play areas. KB explained that with Scribe the financials should be a lot clearer and will be able to easily extract specific information for further analysis.

It was acknowledged that the Council would need to act prudently when setting next year's budget due to the economic climate.

The Annual Accounts and Internal Audit report were discussed. The two audit recommendations have already been actioned by approving the risk assessment and KB had increased the fidelity cover with Zurich and confirmation of this was sent to the Chairman.

JA proposed, GB seconded that the Annual Return be approved by Council.

8. HSBC Safeguarding Review Update

The Clerk reported that a letter had been received from HSBC confirming that the Safeguard review had been successfully completed. This was noted.

Meeting closed 19:13

Signed

Chairman

26th June 2020