



# BISHOP'S CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL



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## MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE TUESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2016 AT 7.00 PM Council Chamber, Bishop's Castle Town Hall

Present: Cllrs K Bavastock, J Carroll, S Harris, and R Houghton  
In attendance: Meg Gwilliam (Assistant Clerk)

### FIRE PROCEDURE

#### **11.16F APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Cllr J Magill.

#### **12.16F DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- a) To declare any disclosable pecuniary interests: None declared.
- b) To declare any personal interests: Cllr Houghton declared a personal interest on agenda item 18.16F Discretions Policy.

#### **13.16F MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of 8<sup>th</sup> March meeting were **approved**.

#### **14.16F COUNCIL AUDIT**

##### **a) preparing for internal audit document revised to committee specifications:**

Now called 'BCTC Preparing for Internal Audit and Review of Internal Controls', the document is a 'working document' to be used each year and as necessary, and the Committee will maintain a 'rolling review' of it, particularly as this is its first year of use. Amendments/revisions will be added as and when. It was **resolved to submit the document to full Council and recommend adoption.**

##### **b & c) Interim internal audit report 2015/16:**

Auditor's point R1 "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", Committee **recommends that in future the minutes should state which powers are used to award grants (also as per agenda item 19.16Fb).** Committee asks, if the GPC lapses, what are Council's powers? It was resolved to **review the status of the Local Council Award Scheme.**

Point R2 "Appropriate amendments to Financial Regulations and Standing Orders should be made to ensure compliance with extant procurement legislative requirements", Committee asks **clerks to check Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and recommend amendments to ensure consistency and compliance with "extant procurement legislative requirements"**.

Point R3 “In order to comply with best accounting and control practice all supplier invoices and direct debit statements should be initialled by the Councillors authorising the payments and when signing cheques”, Councillors said that carrying out invoice/cheque/agenda payment list checks when authorising payments during the last Council meeting felt awkward as it halted the meeting; and to make the process as smooth as possible in future, they asked that **the invoices for payment are presented in strict order of the agenda list so that invoices, cheques, and the list of payments come to hand in an organized manner**. The **Direct Debit statements should also be included, in the order that they appear on the payment list**. Cllr Bavastock agreed that carrying out the checks had felt confusing, however it is an important duty that councillors need to discharge, and it had been the first time and the process will become smoother. The Committee **agreed that Council should continue for at least 3 months and review**. It was also agreed to **recommend that a rubber stamp is purchased as described by the Internal Auditors**.

Point R4 “The Council should ensure that it complies with the requirements of the Governance and Accountability Manual preparing and adopting formally at least once annually a full financial risk assessment”, Committee accepted the Internal Auditors recommendation and will **recommend to full Council that a full annual financial risk assessment be prepared and adopted at least annually**. Finance Committee suggested it could prepare this at first meeting after the Annual Town Council meeting.

Point R5 “In order to comply with best accounting and control practice staff salaries should also be checked by the Councillors authorising the monthly payments”, Committee will **recommend that checking staff salaries to be undertaken by the Staffing Committee each quarter**.

c) to discuss matters arising from internal audit report & clerk’s recommendations:

The Report and its conclusions were **noted** by the Committee. It agreed the report to be comprehensive, and quite onerous, which it should be as it is about dealing with public money.

Committee noted that: training for the clerk had been undertaken (previous internal auditor report); back up is carried out regularly; recommendations from internal audit such as checking staff salaries and noting powers used to make grants will be put to full Council for approval; and Committee was satisfied that all the internal auditor’s recommendations will be addressed.

**It was resolved to ask the clerk to send a letter informing the Internal Auditors how Council is addressing R1 – R5.**

**d) external audit requirements from 2015/16 audit**

It was noted that training for the clerk had been undertaken (previous internal auditor report), and that the recommendations from the internal and external auditors last year have been taken on board and best practice has ensued. **Committee to recommend that this be minuted at full Council.**

**e) external audit governance statement**

Committee looked at the governance statement and **asked it be included on the agenda for the Finance Committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> May.**

## **15.16F UTILITY PROVIDERS**

To discuss the options at the end of the fixed price energy plan for the auction yard toilets from British Gas and make a decision regarding the future

The Committee felt that **two further quotes were needed from competitors** in order to fully ascertain the best way forward for Council. **Clerk to obtain.**

## **16.16F RISK ASSESSMENT 2016**

a) to review draft document of Risk Assessment/Register

**Deferred to the next Finance Committee meeting.**

b) to discuss the proposed Financial Risk Assessment for financial year 2016/17

Purchase of computer package dealt with under agenda item 21.16F.

### **17.16F ASSET REGISTER 2016**

To review the amended 2016 Asset Register

**Deferred to the next Finance Committee meeting. Cllr Carroll will check assets at BCHRC and report back.**

### **18.16F DISCRETIONS POLICY (Pensions)**

To receive an update on the preparation of this document

**The Committee resolved that Council be recommended to adopt this policy.**

### **19.16F GRANTS/DONATIONS and S137**

a) to receive and update retrospective minutes reflecting the powers used for grants 2015/16

b) to ensure that future awards are granted and minuted in accordance with S137 discretionary spending

**Noted. Already covered under agenda item 14.16F above.**

### **20.16F SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL**

To receive an update on financial implications for shared resources/services with neighbouring councils in the light of Shropshire Council's financial difficulties

The information provided by the Clerk was noted. The Chair is attending the informal meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> April and will report back to full Council.

**Committee asked that the financial impact of Shropshire Council's financial strategy become a standard item on the Finance Committee meeting agendas until further notice.**

### **21.16F FINANCIAL REPORT**

To receive a report from the Clerk and RFO and discuss items required to feedback and recommendations to full council:

- Financial package
- LCRS Software
- IOSH training

The Committee agreed with the Clerk's recommendations to purchase the cheaper and more appropriate Alpha instead of Omega financial package, and **resolved to recommend this to full Council.**

The Committee also resolved to **recommend that Council purchase the LCRS software** recommended by the internal auditor and the Clerk.

The Committee resolved to **recommend to Council that it pays for the Clerk to undertake the IOSH training** in June.

Meeting closed at 8.15pm.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:  
Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May**