

**Minutes of the Finance & Governance Meeting
held (electronically) on Thursday 29th July 2021**

Present: Cllr's M Clarke, N Clarke, T Hill, B Lewis, J Pratt, L Tallon-Morris, R Smith

Town Clerk: K Grabham

In attendance: Cllr M Chegwen

1. Apologies for absence

None received

2. To receive Declarations of Interest

None received

3. Committee Action Log

The Clerk introduced the action log and talked members through the progress on the individual items.

Cllr N Clarke queried if the work access sign could be removed from Griffin Park, now all the work has been completed.

4. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 24th June 2021

Resolved: To confirm and sign the minutes as a true and accurate record.

5. To consider item –Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Draft Policy

The Clerk introduced the report and asked members if there were any questions.

Cllr N Clarke asked members if they had any comments to be made, that they are e-mailed to the Clerk no later than Friday 30th June 2021. If no comments or e-mails are received then the policy will progress forward to Full Council as presented.

Resolved to recommend: For Members who wish to comment or add to the report to e-mail the Clerk no later than Friday 30th June 2021. If no e-mails are received, the policy will be taken forward as presented.

6. Town Clerk Reports

a) Quarter One Financial Reports

Members had been circulated an e-mail the day before the committee informing members that due to circumstances beyond the Clerks control the Financial Reports could not be prepared in time.

Therefore the agenda item has been withdrawn.

b) Internal Audit Recommendations Update

The Clerk introduced the report and explained to members that a meeting had taken place between Cllr N Clarke, Cllr T Hill and herself and it was determined which committee each recommendation would sit with. With the intention being that updates will be brought forward to each committee and full council detailing the work that has been completed on the recommendations.

The Clerk informed members of the following: Internal Audit is a process where the internal controls and governance of the Council are looked at. When Town and Community Councils are being audited it is solely the Town Council being audited and not any other entity. It is the Clerks responsibility as the proper officer to ensure that all documentation requested is provided to the internal auditor. It is unusual for the internal auditor to engage with members of the Council or members of the public during the internal audit however, this is down to the internal auditor to determine.

12 internal audit recommendations sit with the Finance & Governance and the Clerk took the members through each recommendation. The 12 recommendation numbers are R1,2,6,9,14,15,16,18,19,20,26 and 27.

Cllr N Clarke highlighted recommendation R9 and informed members that quarterly VAT returns always used to be submitted until PML Accountants took over.

Cllr N Clarke informed members that the only items and statements that are being made must be valid to the recommendations that have been brought forward to this committee.

Cllr M Clarke queried recommendation R 1 Financial accounting package. The Clerk informed Cllr Clarke that the financial package has started to be used and has training scheduled for the software in the next few weeks.

Cllr M Clarke thanked the Clerk for her hard work on the internal auditing informing members that although there may be members who have grumbles regarding the report.

Cllr M Clarke queried that if there is an item in the report that is later evidenced that it is incorrect, for example, the risk assessment for Newton Park. BCBC has been conducting risk assessments for 47 years.

The Clerk informed Cllr M Clarke that as stated by Cllr N Clarke it is only the items relevant to this committee to be discussed however, the Clerk informed Cllr M Clarke that it has now been determined that the risk assessments for Newton Park are being carried out by BCBC every two weeks however, copies of those assessments have never been in the possession of the Council and the auditor will be auditing on the information held and the controls operated by the Council.

Cllr M Clarke queried why in the previous audits this has not been picked up on. The Clerk informed Cllr Clarke that an internal audit is not a forensic audit.

Cllr R Smith queried what happens now when and if information come to light with the audit report being in the public domain. The Clerk informed Cllr R Smith that any information that now comes to light will be evidenced through the recommendations. The internal auditor will note any work on the recommendations in the next report.

Cllr R Smith queried what the process is when paperwork is taken home as we were in a pandemic and working from home. The Clerk informed Cllr Smith that she cannot answer for staff who were in post before, and can only answer for herself. The Clerk informed members that when working from home, she will plan her workload and take the items required and returns them when next in the office. The Clerk informed members that most of the items she works are on are saved in a shared location which limits the need to remove paperwork from the office.

Cllr R Smith queried how hard did we push to obtain information from ex-employees hard drives. The Clerk informed members that BCBC have now been contacted to obtain access to the hard drives.

Cllr J Pratt informed members that he has received a lot of enquiries from residents concerning the play parks. He has informed residents that lack of information does not mean lack of action.

Resolved: For Committee to note the update and the progress on the recommendations.

Members voted to go into a closed session for the next agenda item.

(Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public are excluded from the next agenda item.

c) Town Council Website Redevelopment Quotes.

Cllr T Hill asked members if she could be excused from voting as she does not have a lot of knowledge with regards to website development.

Cllr M Clarke queried how he can declare an interest as the names of the business are removed.

The Clerk took members through the quotes from each company, informed members that each company have been provided with the same brief.

Cllr L Tallon-Morris informed members that he preferred the quote from Company C.

Cllr N Clarke queried are the full charges included in Company C's quote. The Clerk informed members that the full charges are included and staff will be trained on how to upload documents on to the website.

Resolved to recommend: Company C quote be presented to Full Council.

Cllr M Clarke abstained from voting

Cllr T Hill abstained from voting

Cllr B Lewis abstained from voting

Cllr N Clarke had the casting vote and voted in favour of Company C.

Meeting concluded at 07.35pm