



## Morecambe Town Council

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Proper Officer: Mr Luke Trevaskis

### **Minutes of Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held at Morecambe Town Hall at 18.30pm on the thirtieth day of April 2024**

**Present:** Cllrs B Cooper (Chair), J Ainscough, D Bottoms, J Goodrich, P Hart, C Kent, G Knight, J Livermore, J Pilling, D Whitaker

**Officers:** Joel Turner, Peter Fisher, Helen Freeborough

**Press:** None in attendance

**Public:** None.

#### **Minute FG2023/24 - 30 - Apologies**

None.

#### **Minute FG2023/24 - 031 - Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs J Ainscough, P Hart, J Livermore, D Bottoms, B Cooper declared an interest as a Councillor of Lancaster City Council

Cllr D Whittaker declared an interest as an employee of Lancashire County Council.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 032 - Minutes**

The minutes of the last Finance Committee meeting were approved.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 033 - Public Participation**

None.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 034 - Direct Debits**

The Council's Financial Regulations require certain payments made by direct debit to be approved no less than annually. The committee was asked to approve that the additional payments be made by direct debit.

| Name of Supplier          | Amount  | Frequency | Purpose                  |
|---------------------------|---------|-----------|--------------------------|
| British Telecom           | £56.95  | Monthly   | Broadband                |
| CF Corporate Finance      | £199.06 | Quarterly | Tablet Lease             |
| EE Limited                | £718.81 | Monthly   | Mobile Phones            |
| Kingfisher Leasing        | £343.63 | Quarterly | Photocopying Lease       |
| Lancaster City Council    | £903.82 | Annually  | NNDR                     |
| M B Digital               | £26.40  | Monthly   | Printing                 |
| Peninsula Business        | £349.23 | Monthly   | HR Support               |
| Lancashire County Council | Varies  | Monthly   | Pension Contributions    |
| HMRC                      | Varies  | Monthly   | Tax and NI Contributions |
| Paypal                    | Varies  | Varies    | Varies                   |
| Facebook                  | Varies  | Varies    | Advertising              |
| RS Components Ltd         | Varies  | Varies    | Public Realm Supplies    |

Cllr J Piling commented that some of the payments which appear as 'variable' require a greater level of scrutiny. The Council has implemented a comprehensive structure for the scrutiny of payments and this will be undertaken in line with FRs.

Members considered and approved the motion.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 035 - Asset Register**

The Committee was asked to consider and approve additions made to the asset register since its last year in February 2024.

Members considered and approved the additional items on the asset register.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 036 - Payments Exceeding £500.00**

In order to comply with the Transparency Code, the Council is required to publish a list of payments exceeding £500.00 no less than quarterly.

The Committee accepted the list of payments which has been published on the Morecambe Town Council website.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 037- Payment Testing**

In order to comply with its Terms of Reference, the Finance Committee must satisfy itself that it is monitoring the Council's overall compliance with its Finance Regulations to ensure the sound and open governance of financial matters and actions taken in the name of the Council. In line with this ongoing scrutiny, officers invited two members to undertake sample testing for Q4 payments.

The payment numbers provided were: 337, 347, 348, 360, 375, 380, 391, 393, 395, 396, 404, 419, 434, 437, 455, 465

Cllrs Pilling, Bottoms and Livermore who have been involved in the Payment Testing reported that they were satisfied with the process. Cllr Pilling asked that the payments to Facebook, Paypal and RS Components should be part of the payment testing process. Chair of the Committee Cllr B Cooper

encouraged committee members to ask to undertake payment testing if they wish to.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 038 - End of Year Finance 2023-2024**

The Committee was asked to consider the draft end of year finance reports, noting that further adjustments may be made prior to the undertaking of the Internal Audit, namely to consider

- Report Summary of Income and Expenditure
- Income and expenditure account sheet
- Balance Sheet
- Bank Reconciliation.

The Finance Officer explained each report presented.

Cllr J Ainscough asked that Finance Officer provide a more narrative explanation of the reports before this goes to Full Council, in order to be prepared for questions that may arise.

Cllr P Hart asked about the possibility of Morecambe Town Council having a bank account that pays interest on money deposited. (The Council does not currently have such an account). The Finance Officer confirmed that he is currently exploring the options for the Council to open a bank account that does offer interest on monies deposited.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 039 - Audit Assertion Document**

Committee asked to note the explanations within the Audit Assertion Document and that progress is being made to conclude the FY2324 internal audit.

The document sets out what measures the Council has put in place to address the comments from the Internal Auditor. Committee ran through each Assertion 1-8 and noted each explanation.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 040 - External Audit FY2223**

Committee asked to consider the draft responses to the challenge correspondence raised by an objector to the FY2223 accounts, review the proposed responses and agree to recommend these be accepted by the Full Council at its next meeting.

The Committee agreed to recommend that these responses are accepted by Full Council at its next meeting (16 May 2024).

Cllr J Pilling thanked all officers for their hard work on this report.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 041 - Card Facility**

Finance officer reported that the Council currently uses a Petty Cash system for items that are not payable via invoice. FO recommended that the Council explore a Card Facility, which would offer a more practical and best practice approach to such transactions, and presented 3 options for consideration.

Committee approved that FO should apply for a Barclaycard Select Cashback credit card. FO to action.

#### **Minute 2023/24 - 042 - Compliance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

To note that in order to comply with this legislation, decision making officers must produce a written report of decisions they make. The Council notes that it records in its minutes any decisions which it

has delegated to the RFO.

The Committee is asked to recommend to full council that a minimum threshold of £5000.00 be set at which officers are required to produce a written report of decisions made, and that this list be published no less than quarterly. This will not effect the transparency of payments made by the authority, and Members are reminded that all payments above £5000.00 will continue to be published each quarter in line with the Transparency Code 2015.

Members considered and approved the motion.