

**Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting Held
Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 6:30 PM**

Those present :

Chairman : Cllr A Carr

Vice-Chairman : Cllr J Sayers

Councillors : Cllr S Doherty, Cllr K Hughes, Cllr T Hughes, Cllr P Mc Kinley

Officers : D Healey, S Lawrence, A Mc Intyre

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Josh Burns, Carlsen and Desmond.

2 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest ere received.

3 Public Participation.

Due to Covid 19 Regulations public attendance at this meeting will be limited to 6 people. None attended.

4 To Confirm the Minutes of the Last Meeting

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2021 for Finance & General Purposes Committee were approved as a correct record.

5 Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements

Members were informed that the budgets were on target for this time of year, upcoming expenditure to be monitored included the rewire for the Town Hall, a Tree Survey and the demolition of Whinneybrook Pavilion. The Finance Officer informed the budgets continued to be monitored robustly.

RESOLVED that the Financial Statements as of 29th September 2021 be noted.

6 Constitutional Amendments

Members were informed that, at the Full Council meeting on 23rd June 2021, this item which had been deferred from a previous meeting, was discussed. It is the custom and practice of MTC that, if a Member was not present for all of the debate, whether that debate took place across two or more meetings, then that Member could not take part in any further debate or vote on the matter. Members had stated at the Full Council meeting that they were unhappy that this practice stopped them taking part in a debate and requested that the practice be reviewed.

The proposed change was on P20 of the Constitution and comprised the following addition:

A) Councillor may not be present for part of the debate but must be sat in their chair when the vote is on any matter is taken.

B) Councillor must be present for some of the debate before they can vote on the matter.

Members considered fully the implications of the proposed changes and the danger that this would lead to less robust decision making in the Chamber. Following a full debate on the matter it was proposed that it be recommended that no amendments be made to the constitution and to maintain the status quo.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. No amendments be made to the constitution and to maintain the status quo;**
- 2. That the report be noted.**

7 Scheme of Delegation Amendments

Members were informed MTC had a Scheme of Delegation in operation. The Mayor had requested that a new grant be determined which would be a minor civic award for those residents, community groups and businesses who go above and beyond during the course of the year. This meant the Scheme of Delegation needed an amendment to allow the Community Services Committee to determine the awards. The award would be a certificate, photo and a book token or something of a similar monetary value no more than £30.00. The costs of the award would be met from the Mayor's allowance.

Members were informed Councillors cannot make decisions or take actions on their own. This matter, therefore, would be given to the Community Services Committee as part of their remit.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. All members agreed to recommend the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation as detailed in the report to Full Council on 3rd November 2021;**
- 2. That the report be noted.**

8 Business Plan Review

Members were informed the Town Clerk had completed a review of the projects contained within the Business Plan with the assistance of the Amenities Manager and the Community Services Manager. The projects had been hit by the twin problems of the Covid pandemic, meaning that a number of partner agencies the Council had hoped to work with had diverted their priorities away from the stated objectives pre Covid or they were unable to go ahead due to the pandemic itself. Others had been overtaken by the lack of funding to complete them. These include the Town Centre Masterplan (a Neighbourhood Plan policy), the Local Health and Wellbeing Board and the development of the Maghull Hub.

MTC as at 29th September 2021, had 19 months left of its 4 year term. This was an opportunity for MTC to refocus its efforts to complete more of the stated projects before their term of office ended. Members were informed they should review the Plan as part of their scrutiny function, and recommend to Full Council any projects which need to be revisited.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. All members agreed to the Town Clerk's recommended projects be taken to Full Council on 3rd November 2021;**
- 2. That the report be noted.**



9 Risk Management Policy and Strategy

Members were informed that the Internal Auditor's report had been received at the last meeting. One of the resolutions was for a Risk Management Policy to be produced. This was now before the Committee together with a Risk Management Strategy which stated how the Policy would be implemented.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The Risk Management Policy and Strategy be approved;**
- 2. That the report be noted.**

10 Chairman's Closing Comments

The Chair thanked all members for attending the meeting.

11 Exclusion of Press & Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded due to confidential nature of the item under discussion.

12 Council Liabilities

Members requested a breakdown of the MTC's liabilities at the last Finance & General Purposes meeting. The report put MTC's financial position in an easily understandable format. However, there were some unknowns. The Pension Provider, Merseyside Pension Fund (MPF) required the Council to have some discretionary policies to be decided by the Council in the event of a member of staff retiring for example on ill health or whether additional payments to the pension will be made in certain circumstances. MPF were unable to give costs for these as they would be provided on a case by case basis, based on the individual's circumstances and length of service.

The Information provided was based on Personnel, Loans, Reserves and Current Financial Situation. The Council did not have any investments at this time.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13 Debtors to the Council

Members were informed that, prior to lockdown, a number of invoices were issued to users of the Town Hall and other buildings. The Responsible Finance Officer recommended to the Committee that it was now appropriate to re-instate the Debtors policy.

RESOLVED that:-

- 1. The Responsible Finance Officer pursue any debt using the debtors' procedures.**
- 2. If payment was still not received the RFO/Town Clerk be authorised to pursue the outstanding debt, possibly by use of a debt collection agency or via Sefton Legal Services;**
- 3. That the report be noted.**



