

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 14 June 2022

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Mark Dykes and Councillors Stevens (Chair), Andrews, Toynbee, Tillett, Oliver, Williams and Foxton

In attendance: Steve Kerry Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

PR2022/23.1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Councillor Foxton proposed, Councillor Dykes seconded, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED That Councillor Stevens be appointed to Chair the Committee for the municipal year.

Councillor Foxton proposed, Councillor Andrews seconded, and it was unanimously

RESOLVED That Councillor Wilcox be appointed to act as Vice Chair of the Committee for the municipal year.

PR2022/23.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillors Boulter and Wilcox.

PR2022/23.3 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES

The Clerk reported that Councillor Boulter had appointed Councillor Foxton as her substitute. The Chair thanked Councillor Foxton for attending.

PR2022/23.4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

PR2022/23.5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Tillett noted two minor corrections to punctuation after which it was proposed by Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Tillett and unanimously

RESOLVED That the minutes as corrected be accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

PR2022/23.6 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chair drew members' attention to the additional breakdown of items paid under BACS which show as a single transaction on the schedules. This additional information would be circulated with the agenda for subsequent meetings, and with that in mind members would be asked to submit questions in advance of the meeting to enable full answers to be researched.

Any questions arising from the additional information would be answered by email – why were there a number of reversals of payments? In answer to a question regarding the payment to John Finch Computing, the Clerk confirmed this included annual items and recent equipment purchases including a new laptop as one had been replaced.

Subject to any further information from the Finance Officer or Administration and Events Manager after the meeting, members noted the schedule of payments.

PR2022/23.7 BANK RECONCILIATIONS

Reconciliations on all accounts were presented up to the end of May. A question was raised as to an unrepresented item for BACS settlement of £8,500, this would be responded to by email after the meeting.

PR2022/23.8 INTERNAL AUDIT

The Clerk presented the final internal audit report of the year and asked members to note it had been completed on time and would be included with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and that it was clear of any adverse comments or recommendations. The Chair asked that the thanks of the Committee be conveyed to the Finance Team for producing another unblemished outcome. The Clerk added that this was particularly creditable as it reflected a period of partly COVID-19 shut down and partly recovery with different levels of activity across many Council functions, and the introduction of a new payments system. Despite all these changes the team had managed to maintain correct controls and processes throughout.

Members noted the audit report.

PR2022/23.9 2021/22 CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS, REPORT ON VARIANCES AND COMPLETION OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

The Clerk presented the reports and asked members to note that the figures for 2020/21 on the summary of the accounts had been noted as “restated”. Normally these figures would be the same in the left column as the figures in the right column in the previous year. However, due to a mid-year revaluation of the civic treasures the figure in box 9 for fixed assets had been updated. To explain this apparent discrepancy the term “restated” was used to show that something had changed, not to indicate the correction of an error. The main factor in the revaluation is the weight of gold and silver set against the current prices for these metals, it is only marginally affected by aesthetic or historical considerations.

Members noted that some four months earlier the Clerk had projected an underspend of around £200,000 and that in fact at year end it had been £201,000 which was commendably accurate. The accumulated underspend over the last couple of years would allow for an earmarked reserve to support the bus project to be established at £300,000, which was twice the anticipated annual revenue cost and had been an important factor in establishing the continuing viability of the project as inflation has soared recently.

In answer to a query, it was confirmed that it is correct to show the Mayor as Councillor Stevens as he was in office at 31 March 2022 when the accounts were closed.

Information had been supplied with the annual budget as to the functions of staff and this would be recirculated as a reminder to members.

It was proposed by Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Williams and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Committee endorses the statements above and recommends acceptance of the accounts and the AGAR as drafted to Council at its meeting on 21 June 2022.

PR2022/23.10 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Tillett, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

RESOLVED To exclude the press and public as the next two items on the agenda would require the disclosure of personal information about living persons.

PR2022/23.11 STANDARD WORKING HOURS FOR THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

After confidential discussion the hours allocated to the above post were resolved.

PR2022/23.12 PROPOSAL TO AWARD FREEDOM OF THE CITY

After confidential discussion the proposal was resolved to be taken to full Council for approval.

PR2022/23.13 READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved without a vote to readmit the press and public.

PR2022/23.14 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Hereford Zipper – to report the government’s decision on the Stronger Towns Fund Bid
Policy Reviews

PR2022/13.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 4 October 2022 at 6 pm

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting at 6.45pm

Signed.....

Date