



UTTOXETER TOWN COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VIRTUAL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE ARISING FROM ITS MEETING ON TUESDAY, 26 JANUARY 2021 AT 5.00 PM

Chair – Councillor S McGarry

Councillors: M Crutchley, D Goodfellow, P Hudson, Z Krupski, C Sylvester

The Chair welcomed Members to the Virtual Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting being held as in accordance with NALC L01-20 Regulation 5(2) of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (which came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to meetings taking place before 7 May 2021).

It was noted that the meeting was available via <https://zoom.us/join> and that the Zoom Meeting ID was 958 7376 3270. Councillor McGarry reported that the meeting was open to the public and the press unless the Council otherwise directs as in accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. She reported that Members and Residents without computer access could participate within the meeting by telephoning 0131 460 1196 and by entering the Meeting ID.

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

The Chair to provide a brief on the provisions of the Filming of Meetings as in accordance with "The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014" and the use of mobile phones during the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(a) The Clerk reported that receipt of approved apologies from Councillor C Green.

RECOMMENDED that the same be noted and approved.

(b) It was noted that all other Committee Members were in attendance at the meeting.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In accordance with Standing Order 3(e-g), the meeting be adjourned for up to 15 minutes to allow for public participation where members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they were entitled to attend in respect of the business on the Agenda. The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting as in accordance with standing order 3(e) shall not exceed (3) minutes unless directed by the Chair of the meeting. It was noted that members of the public may not take part in the Council meeting itself.

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting, and which was not included in the register of interests. Members were reminded that they were required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they had a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest was entered in the register of members' interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

None.

5. DRAFT PROCUREMENT POLICY

Committee was asked to give consideration to the Draft Procurement Policy as provided by Councillor Fitchett, prior to it being considered/adopted by Council. The Clerk reported that Council's Internal Auditor had advised that he wished to make some amendments to the Draft.

Signed: Date:

The Clerk reported that she understood that Council requested for the Procurement Policy to relate to the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders. The Chair reported that Council would be reviewing its Financial Regulations and updated Standing Orders in February/March. It was noted that Councillor C Sylvester requested a further copy of the Financial Regulations and current Standing Orders to enable him to peruse the documents accordingly.

Members perused the Draft Procurement Policy and suggested additional content be incorporated (flow chart for ease of use).

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The Clerk liaise further with Council's Internal Auditor with respect to the Draft Procurement Policy together with updating of the Financial Regulations to enable the RFO/Office Manager to make BACS payments where possible.
- (ii) The Clerk liaise with Councillor Fitchett with respect to feedback received from Council's Internal Auditor.
- (iii) Committee Members be urged to email the Clerk with their comments as soon as possible.
- (iv) Include the updated Draft Procurement Policy for consideration by Committee at its meeting scheduled to take place on 23 February 2021.

6. **ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND - UTC BANK ACCOUNTS INCLUDING BUSINESS BANKING SWITCH SCHEME**

As recommended by Committee at its meeting held on 22 December 2020 that the Chair of F&GP and the Clerk be tasked with:

- (i) Obtaining the current offers for the Banking Switch.*
- (ii) Obtain details for Deposit Accounts.*
- (iii) Provide Committee with a spreadsheet of the accounts (current and proposed) including interest rates for consideration by Committee at its next meeting.*

Committee was provided with the latest Banking Switch offers available to the Council which were perused accordingly. The Clerk reported that the Bank Switch deadline was 28 February 2021 and was subject to the relevant bank accepting the Council's business.

The Chair reported that, due to timescales of meetings, work pressures and current guidance, she and Clerk had been unable to carry out (ii)-(iii) as above.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The Chair of F&GP and the Clerk be authorised to liaise with the Co-op Bank with respect to accepting their offer of a Business Directplus Current Account (£4,000 cashback for switching, 30 months free everyday banking), which was the closest link to something local, for the Council's Current Account, to be reviewed in 24 months.
- (ii) The Chair of F&GP and the Clerk seek/ensure where possible, that Council obtains free banking services.

7. **BT CONTRACTS – TELEPHONE AND BROADBAND UPDATE**

As recommended by Committee at its meeting held on 22 December 2020 that the Chair of F&GP and the Clerk be tasked with:

- (i) No action be taken and no new Contract be entered into.*
- (ii) The Clerk liaise with Councillor C Sylvester to seek alternative quotations for all provisions for the Council's services including coverage throughout the Town Hall.*
- (iii) The Chair and the Clerk provide Committee with comparisons for services for consideration by Committee at its next meeting.*

(a) The Clerk reported that BT were currently reviewing all the Council's Contracts to ascertain if they could provide the Council with any savings on its current provisions.

RECOMMENDED that the same be noted.

- (b) The Chair reported that Councillor C Sylvester had provided the Clerk with two suppliers on 25 January 2021 and that she and the Clerk would seek to obtain alternative quotations for all provisions for the Council's services including coverage throughout the Town Hall. It was noted that the Chair had also provided an alternative provider that would be explored.

RECOMMENDED that the Chair of F&GP and the Clerk provide Committee with a breakdown of proposals for consideration by Committee at its next meeting.

- 8. **COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE – PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**
Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act it was requested that the public and press were not present due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and were asked to withdraw.

RECOMMENDED that the same be noted.

- 9. **VENTILATION WORKS TO THE TOWN HALL BASEMENT/CELLAR AREA**
The Clerk reported receipt of a quotation received from Council's Architect Matthew Montague for the proposals to the Town Hall cellar/basement.

The Clerk reminded Committee that advised to Council at its annual precept Meeting, that in addition to the costings for the electrical and mechanical works to the cellar, Montague Architects had suggested £6,500 be allocated for Contractor fees which would be in addition to Montague's Architects fees in the sum of £1,800 for the drawing up the plans and for submitting the planning documentation. The Clerk reported that the Architect fee did not include obtaining Tenders. The Clerk reported that Council's Architect had suggested that a Contractor who was familiar with the basement/Town Hall be used on this occasion. Committee instruction was sought.

Committee was informed that £10,000 had been included within the Precept for 2021-22 and that the balance would be funded by the Town Hall repairs and maintenance budget/General Free Funds.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) The quotation received from Montague Architects in the sum of £1,800 for the drawing up the plans and for submitting the planning documentation, be accepted and approved, funded by the Town Hall repairs and maintenance budget.
- (ii) The Clerk liaise with Council's Architect to advise that Committee request that quotations for the ventilation works to the cellar/basement be obtained from a number of Contractors through the procurement process.
- (iii) This matter be included for further consideration by Committee at its next meeting.

- 10. **KIOSK (CONDUIT) WORKS**

- (a) The Clerk reported receipt of Listed Building Consent as received 5 January 2021.

RECOMMENDED that the same be noted.

- (b) The Clerk reported that the Mayor had duly Signed the Kiosk Lease Agreement for a further 3-year term (as in accordance with the previous Lease subject to annual increase as included within the Estimates).

RECOMMENDED that the same be noted and approved.

- (c) The Clerk reported receipt of an email dated 18 January 2021 informing Committee that the works to the Kiosk should commence after 1 April to avoid frosts affecting the mortar pointing required to the dome and the external walls. Committee was advised that Midland Conservation Limited had confirmed that the works to Phase I (dome/roof works) would take 4 weeks and Phase II works (external repointing works) would take 2-3 weeks, subject to

Signed: Date:

being carried out separately. She reported that if the works were carried out together, Midland Conservation Limited had confirmed that the works would take 6 weeks. The Clerk provided Committee with an update on the delay of the works and the damage to the ceiling and flooring which required replacement.

Following a conversation with the Tenant on 20 January 2021, Committee considered:

- (i) Phase I and Phase II works being carried out at the same time to reduce the time period of closure (subject to confirmation from the Tenant that he can trade from a mobile catering unit).
- (ii) Rental charges due to the Tenant during the works.
- (iii) Subject to confirmation from the Tenant, Committee is asked to give consideration to any charges due for the mobile unit during the works.
- (iv) To report that the ceiling located internally within the Kiosk is in need of replacement due to the continued ingress of water seeping through the roof and works to the floor. Committee is informed that the Tenant is happy to seek quotations for the replacement roof and flooring however wishes for Committee to acknowledge that he is not liable for the costs associated with the replacement due to the ongoing water ingress issues over a lengthy period of time.

Committee instruction was sought.

RECOMMENDED that the Clerk liaise with Council's Tenant to advise that:

- (i) The Phase I and Phase II works be carried out at the same time.
- (ii) Two months free rent on the Kiosk will be provided during the works.
- (iii) Should alternative mobile provisions be provided by the Tenant, no rental charges will be due during the works.
- (iv) Quotations be obtained for the replacement of the ceiling and flooring (to be considered by Committee at its next meeting).

11. TOWN HALL INTRUDER ALARM SYSTEM

The Clerk reported that she is currently liaising with Chubb Alarms and EDG Security Systems with respect to the annual maintenance of the Town Hall intruder alarm system.

RECOMMENDED that the Clerk provide Committee with an update at its next meeting.

12. NEW EARMARKED FUNDS

- (a) Committee was asked to give consideration to the following proposed new Earmarked Reserves from within the current budget allocations subject to no expenditure being incurred up to and including 31 March 2021 (prior to due consideration by Council at a future meeting):
 - (i) Virement of £2,000 to the existing War Memorial EMR
 - (ii) Virement of £1,166 from 1100/102 to make a new Town Hall/Town Centre Events (Tesco Groundwork Grant) EMR
 - (iii) Virement of Election costs in the sum of £7,000 to make a new Election Costs EMR
 - (iv) Virement of £2,500 to make a new Cemetery Tree/Bulb Planting EMR
 - (v) Virement of £4,050 to make a new Above Ground Level Sanctum EMR
 - (vi) Virement of £2,500 to make a new Cycle Rack EMR (subject to 17 as above)

Committee instruction was sought.

RECOMMENDED that, subject to no expenditure on the above-mentioned current budget allocations, the proposed Earmarked Reserves as (i)-(iv) as above, be accepted and approved.

- (b) Members were issued with the Current Earmarked Reserves as approved by Council on 24 November 2020.

RECOMMENDED that the Totem Signage Earmarked Reserve be renamed to SIDS/Gateways/Town Entry Signage Earmarked Reserve.

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm.

Signed: Date: