

Snodland Town Council – Policy and Finance Minutes

19th October 2023

Committee Members in attendance:	(C) Miss V Lawrence, (VC) D Lettington, Mrs Sue Bell, Angus Bennison, Paul Hickmott, Ms D King, Mrs V Barker, W Mallard
Non Committee Members in attendance:	Cllrs G Miners and D Morgan
Committee Members Absent with apologies:	
Committee Members Absent without apologies:	
Council Staff Present:	Mrs K Sowten (CEO)
Members of the public:	

1.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> see above
2.	<u>Declaration of Interests</u> Cllr Hickmott Agenda Item 8
3.	<u>Minutes - To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 29th August 2023</u> The minutes of the meeting held on the 29 th August 2023 were agreed as a true record.
4.	<u>Questions from the Public</u> <i>Pursuant to Standing Order 3 e & g Members of the public may make representation, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes</i> There were no members of the public present
5.	<u>Audit Trail to be given by a Councillor</u> An audit report was not carried out by the delegated Councillor on this occasion. Cllr Hickmott apologised for not carrying out the audit and suggested that he attend the office and carry out a report retrospectively, which was accepted. The Chairman re-iterated that it is the Councillors responsibility to contact the CEO to arrange for the audit to be carried out. Copies of the Audit Rota are provided with each Agenda which has the dates for each Councillor to attend, it was suggested that Councillors put a reminder in their calender. The rota only requires one visit per councillor per year and if possible it should be carried out at least two weeks prior to the meeting to enable the report to be sent out with the agenda.
6.	<u>Financial Review</u> A copy of the financial review was sent out to members of the committee prior to the meeting, a copy is available on file. One query was raised on the income and expenditure report 4505/250. The CEO explained that the cost is entered into the correct cost centre, however as this expenditure came out of earmarked reserves, it shows up as an overspend in the account, however the final column on the report shows that the funds have been transferred from Earmarked Reserves. Going forward in next years budget, all expenditure from earmarked/capital reserves will be

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	<p>entered against a newly created earmarked/capital reserve cost centre. Following an application being submitted to KCC for the installation of the Christmas Lights, The CEO has received a quotation from KCC for load testing that needs to be carried out to enable the Christmas Lights to be installed. Without the load testing KCC will not permit the lights to be installed on their lampposts.</p> <p>The cost of the load test is £1560 plus VAT. This test is required every 3 years.</p> <p>It was suggested that a new Earmarked reserve fund is set up in next years budget to spread the cost over the 3 year period.</p> <p>1107 RESOLVED to accept the cost of £1560 plus VAT for load testing on the street light column. Cost to come out of Repair and Renewal Earmarked reserves.</p> <p>1108 RESOLVED to set up an Earmarked Reserve fund for the cost of the Street Light load testing to spread the cost over a three year period.</p> <p>The gas and electric contracts are due for renewal in December. (Report attached). The existing contractor has supplied quotes for a one year renewal. Our broker has also supplied quotes for both 1 and 2 year contracts. Taking out a two year contract has shown a saving of over £14000. The broker has advised that due to the current world climate the prices will not reduce to a level that has been seen in previous years and would recommend accepting the two year contract on all supplies.</p> <p>1109 RESOLVED to accept the new two year contract with British Gas Lite for gas and electricity supplies.</p> <p>6.1 Earmarked Reserve and Capital Reserve Balances</p> <p>The Committee received a report on the balances relating to Earmarked and Capital Reserves. The Committee thanked the CEO for including this in the Audit report, which gives an overall view of the reserve balances.</p> <p>6.2 Aged Debtors</p> <p>The committee reviewed the aged debtors. The CEO advised that the outstanding balances had been chased within the last two weeks and are awaiting a response. These will be chased again on 23/10/23. The Committee were aware of one significant debt which was discussed at a previous meeting under confidential items. The remaining balances were discussed and accepted.</p>
7.	<p><u>To receive the external auditor report</u></p> <p>The Committee received the external audit report. On the basis of the review by Mazars LLP the external auditor, the auditors advised that the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to the attention of the auditors giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.</p> <p>The Committee congratulated the CEO on yet another positive audit.</p>

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8.	<p><u>To consider service level agreements for provision of minor works relating to Plumbing and Heating, Electrical, Tree Works, Play equipment repairs.</u></p> <p>In the current economic market, which is very volatile it is proving increasingly difficult, time consuming and not cost effective to try and obtain 3 quotes for minor works that need to be carried out. The time scale between meetings makes it increasingly difficult for works to be carried out in a timely manor with approval required by council before any work can commence.</p> <p>The Committee considered the need to improve the efficiency for arranging the provision of minor works that need to be carried out within the council and felt that some form of provision was required to enable the CEO to chose from a list of preferred contractors. Also to have accounts with local electrical and plumbing suppliers, so that parts could be purchased direct if required.</p> <p>It was felt that contracts were not required, however to give the CEO more automany to be able to approach contractors and get work carried out up to a £2000 limit.</p> <p>All expenditure would be reported at each Policy and Finance meeting.</p> <p>RECOMMEND to allow the CEO under delegated authority to approach contractors to carry out minor works up to a £2000 limit, from a preferred contractor list.</p>
9.	<p><u>To consider and if agreed update the financial regulations section 4.1 and 4.5 relating to the authority to spend for delegated Committees and the CEO.</u></p> <p>An update to the financial regulations was considered to increase the spending limit under £2000 for the CEO under delegated responsibility for minor works required. To also allow the CEO to negotiate and agree utility contract renewals, to achieve the best rates and report to the next appropriate meeting.</p> <p>RECOMMEND to update the financial regulations to increase the spend limit for the CEO under delegated responsibility for minor works under £2000. All expenditure would be reported at each Policy and Finance meeting.</p> <p>RECOMMEND to update the financial regulations to allow the CEO to negotiate and agree utility contract renewals to achieve the best rates and report to the next appropriate meeting.</p> <p>An update to the financial regulations was considered to increase the spending limit under £5000 for each of the delegated Committees and to change the spend limited for Full Council approval to anything over £5000.</p> <p>RECOMMEND to increase the spend limit for each delegated committee to under £5000.</p> <p>RECOMMEND to change the spend limit for Full Council approval to anything over £5000.</p>
10.	<p><u>To Approve costs relating to lift repairs</u></p> <p>The Committee considered a quotation from the Lift Service Company to replace the upper carriage safety bar due to the lift over travelling and the floor indicator buttons that are sticking due to age wear and tear. Total cost of repair £1022 plus VAT.</p> <p>As there is a service contract for the lift no further quotes have been sourced.</p>

