

NOTES of the FINANCE KEY AREA GROUP MEETING held in the Council Chamber on Monday 24 June 2024 at 18.30 hours.

KAG MEMBERS:                      Graham Fairbairn - Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)  
Cllr Bob Foster  
Cllr Jon Gardner\*  
Cllr Matthew Goldsmith  
Cllr Janice Henwood  
Cllr Simon Hicks  
Cllr Cedric De Souza (Chairman)  
Cllr Adam White

Also Present:

Cllr Graham Allen  
Cllr Diane Black  
Cllr Stuart Condie (arrived 18.45)  
Cllr Matthew Cornish  
Steve Cridland – CEO  
Cllr David Eggleton  
Cllr Robert Eggleston  
Cllr Anne Eves  
Cllr Matthew Goldsmith  
Cllr Mohammad Hossain (arrived 18.55)  
Cllr Tofojjul Hussain  
Cllr John Orchard  
Cllr Andy Stowe  
Cllr Brenda Williams  
Cllr Peter Williams

\*Denotes absence

*Meeting started 18.30 hrs*

#### **41. Open Forum**

A Member of the public queried the approval process of recent payments to subcontractors in regard to design work for the Beehive Project.

The RFO replied that he did not know the details but would look into the matter and a response would be forwarded accordingly.

#### **42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr Jon Gardner

#### **43. SUBSTITUTES**

Cllr Diane Black

#### **44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Cedric De Souza – in regard to item 12.2 Park Centre Burgess Hill CIO, as he is a Trustee and the treasurer.

**45. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

- 46. PAYMENTS MADE** – It was recorded a full listing of payments made, including those via the town council's business card, are displayed on the council's website on a quarterly basis and can be viewed accordingly.

**47. ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE FINANCE KAG** for the ensuing year

Cllr Simon Hicks was unanimously appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Finance KAG.

**48. NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Notes of the previous Finance Key Area Group meeting, dated 22 January 2024, were approved by Members and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**49. INTERNAL AUDIT – FINAL 2023/24**

Members received a report, as set out in agenda item 8, dated 24 June 2024, in regard to the final Internal Audit for the 2023/24 financial year.

It was reported that no items of a material nature needed to be brought to the attention of Members.

**RESOLVED**

- a) To approve the final internal audit report for 2023/24,
- b) Reappoint Mulberry as the internal auditor for 2024/25, and
- c) Thank the RFO and his team for their work towards providing a "clean" audit.

**50. FINANCIAL RESULT FOR THE 2023/24 FINANCIAL YEAR (Subject to External Audit)**

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 9, dated 24 June 2024, appraising Members of the final result for the 2023/24 financial year.

Members were informed the town council would post a surplus of £19,184.

During the ensuing discussion, a summary of the major budget movements was given orally.

**RESOLVED**

- a) To approve the Financial Result for the year to 31 March 2024, and
- b) To transfer the surplus to the Community Building Fund (as per the Finance KAG meeting of the 20 January 2024).

## 51. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN PART 3

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 10, dated 24 June 2024, presenting the statutory Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the 2023/24 financial year.

The purpose of the AGAR is to summarise the Council's financial activities and governance, in a specified format, at the completion of each financial year.

### RESOLVED:

- a) To agree the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023/24, and
- b) Forward to Council for formal approval.

## 52. REVIEW OF BUDGET YEAR 2024/25

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 11, dated 24 June 2024, highlighting major income and expenditure movements, if any, from budget.

The report noted, with less than 3 months of the year completed, there were no significant movements in the Revenue Budget.

### RESOLVED:

To note the contents of the report.

## 53. EARMARKED and GENERAL RESERVES

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 12, dated 24 June 2024, providing an update as to the status of the council's reserves.

The report summarised the larger reserves and highlighted individual items for further discussion.

### **3053 QEA Budget – £8k**

Members agreed to utilise this reserve towards the provision of a new bus shelter and a Real Time Passenger Information display.

### **3037 Community Buildings & Projects Fund £499k**

Members received a report noting the involvement of the town council in a number of substantial projects. These were, in the main, the development of phase 2 of the burial ground, support for redevelopment of the Park Centre in Burgess Hill, support for the redevelopment of the St John's cricket pavilion and the development of the former Royal British Legion site (known as *The Beehive* project).

The cost involvement of the town council on the first three projects was estimated at £1.2million, whilst the Beehive was in the region of £5million+ . It was noted these costings were just estimates and it would be for the Strategic KAG meeting in July 2024, and, potentially, the Members' Visioning day in October, to look in more detail at the overall Capital Projects Programme.

During the ensuing discussion, members from the Park Centre Burgess Hill CIO raised concerns in regard to the time-scale in the release of funds to progress the Park Centre project. It was noted there were a number of issues to be resolved between the town council and the Park Centre and it was agreed the town council's RFO would organise a meeting with representatives of the Park Centre to formalise a better working relationship, perhaps in the format of a Joint Working Party.

Members were also appraised there was some £242k within the town council's General Reserve, of which, some £44k was available to use for other projects and activities.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) To approve the reserves schedule as presented,
- b) To utilise the residual amount of £8k in the Queen Elizabeth Avenue Fund towards the provision of a new bus shelter and Real Time Passenger Information display, and,
- c) For the RFO to set-up a meeting with representatives of the Park Centre Burgess Hill CIO to formalise a better working relationship.

**42. BANK RECONCILIATION AND INVESTMENTS**

Members received a report as set out in agenda item 13, dated 24 June 2024, providing a copy of a recent bank statement for Members to review and to highlight the status of the town council's cash and deposit position.

**RESOLVED**

To note the contents of the report.

**43. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be held in November 2024 – exact date to be confirmed.

*Meeting concluded 19.25 hours*