



Minutes from the **Policy, Process & Revenue Committee** held on **Monday 19th December 2022**
in **Gallery 2, Castle Park Arts Centre**

POLICY, PROCESS & REVENUE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Meeting 4

Attended by: Cllr McKeown (Chair), Cllr Eakin, Cllr Hayes, Cllr Stockton & Cllr Sumner.

Also in attendance: Z. Dean (Locum Town Clerk) & 2 x members of the public.

1. Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED: To accept apologies for absence from Cllr Griffiths: unwell.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr L. Sumner declared an interest in the Green Gates Project.

3. Requests from members of the Public to Speak

One member of the public wished to speak: Item 6, Invoice Fraud, noting there must have been vulnerabilities of the Council's IT system and this should perhaps be considered when the IT contract comes up for renewal. Item 7, since the contractor was not implicated in the invoice fraud then, it was the member of the public's opinion, that the outstanding invoices should be paid, with the Council taking this a loss. There must have been procedural failure with the Council, the Chairs of the Council need to familiarise themselves with the policies every 12 months and consider thorough reviews. The member of the public questioned the usefulness of CHALC training.

The member of the public commended the Council on making this issue public, noting that over 50% of the Policy, Process & Revenue Committee's budget had been spent to date. The member of the public asked committee to reign in expenditure.

The Chair of the Committee thanked the member of the public for their comments.

4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th October 2022

RESOLVED: To accept and sign the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. Accounts

(a) **RESOLVED:** To accept and sign the Month 8 Accounts.

(b) **RESOLVED:** To receive and sign the total monthly BACS, Direct Debits and manual cheque payments put before the committee.

(c) **RESOLVED:** To note that after all considerations, total cash balances as of 30th November 2022.

6. Notification of Invoice Fraud

RESOLVED: To note the Invoice Fraud Report.

7. Payment of Invoices

RESOLVED: To pay the invoices, previously left unpaid to the supplier, following the invoice fraud.

8. Interim Internal Audit Report

(a) **RESOLVED:** To note the report provided by the Council's Internal Auditor.

(b) **Recommendations listed in the report**

The committee noted that the report had been updated following the Town Clerk's input, to include the fact that the contracts had been listed on Contract Finder. Committee asked for the website to be checked and evidence provided to the auditor.

The auditor's comments contained within the report were read out to committee covering the following issues:

Issue 1 – Council Victim of Invoice Fraud

Issue 2 – Fraudulent payment posted in the ledger as expenditure made to the original supplier and VAT has been accounted for relating to this payment. The amount due to the bona fide supplier has not yet been paid.

Issue 3 – Council incurred significant expenditure in 2022/23 in the development of the Ship Street Play Area and the 'Memorial Path'.

Issue 4 – A review of the most recent budget report identified that the following ledger codes appear with the description 'not in use'.

RESOLVED: To accept the recommendations contained within the Interim Audit Report, submitting feedback where appropriate, specifically relating to contract finder update and expenditure relating to Ship Street Play Area.

9. Budget Setting Meeting

RESOLVED: To change the Budget Setting meeting date from 9th January to the 16th January 2023.

10. External Support from DCK Accounting

(a) **RESOLVED:** To accept the booking for onsite 2023/24 Budget Overview support and advice from DCK Accounting Solutions at £520 plus expenses.

(b) **RESOLVED:** To approve Year End Closedown Service from DCK Accounting Solutions at £460 plus expenses.

(c) **RESOLVED:** To approve Full Year End Accounts Pack support package from DCK Accounting Solutions at £375, plus expenses.

The committee wished to note that these decision were taken for peace of mind following the recent issues regarding the invoice fraud.

11. Change of Ownership Rialtas

The letter detailing change of ownership of Rialtas Accounting Software was noted.

12. Over 70's Vouchers Scheme 2022

Committee noted that there had been an excellent take-up of the Over 70's Voucher Scheme in 2022 after the face value of the vouchers increased to £15.00. Some residents had complained that they were left very disappointed after missing the deadline.

RESOLVED: To send out the additional vouchers, moving funds across from the unspent Bonfire Night budget code: 140/4758 to cover any overspend.

It was noted that this was decision was as gesture of goodwill by committee, in the spirit of Christmas, and not setting future precedent.

RESOLVED: To split the remainder of the printed vouchers between the three Frodsham Care Homes (in the region of £150).

13. New Code

The committee noted that a new code had been created to show agreed expenditure of Christmas Cakes for Care Homes, under 140/4731.

14. Payroll Fees

Committee noted that the Annual Payroll fees would increase to £264 which was a 10% rise.

15. Cleaning Contract Castle Park

Prices for this item had not yet been received.

Members agreed to defer this item until Full Council on 23rd January 2023, seeking additional quotes in the meantime.

Committee noted to check the level of service provided from Cheshire West & Chester Council, seeking a potential rental reduction, since the offices would no longer be fully serviced from January 2023 onwards.

16. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: To exclude the public and press for the remainder of the meeting.

17. Additional Staff Extension

RESOLVED: To extend the Locum Town Clerk's contract for a minimum of two months. It was noted to check the Town Clerk's annual leave status.

18. Date of next meeting

Committee noted the date of the next meeting: 27th February 2023.

19. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 20:15.