

**DAVENTRY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Finance, Policy & Assets Committee held at 3 New Street, Daventry on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 18:30hrs.**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Alan Knapé – Chair

**Councillors**

Ian Adkins  
Mike Arnold  
Ted Nicholl  
Janet Matthews  
Lynne Taylor

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Sarah Fox - Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)  
Deborah Jewell - Chief Officer (CO)  
Mel Bland – Operations Officer  
0 Members of the Public  
0 Members of the Press

**OPEN FORUM.**

None.

**FP2410.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Councillor	Apologies	Resolved
Scott Cameron	None received	Apologies Approved
Stephen Dabbs	Received and considered	Apologies Approved
Katie Thurston	Received and considered	Apologies Approved

**FP2410.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS.**

No pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests declared.

**FP2410.3 MINUTES.**

<b>RESOLVED:</b>	That the Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> September, be approved, and signed as a correct record.
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**FP2410.4 EMPLOYERS' NEW DUTY TO PREVENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT.**

The Chief Officer advised that from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2024 new legislation will take effect that places greater responsibility and legal requirements on all employers, to take proactive steps to prevent Sexual and General Harassment within the workplace. Members referred to the report, and the Chief Officer advised that the draft policy and procedure was to be considered as part of agenda items P2410.5 (ii).

**FP2410.5 POLICIES.**

<b>RECOMMENDED</b>	(i) Risk Management Scheme, as amended be approved. (ii) To approve in principle the Sexual and General Harassment Policy and Procedure for the purposes of consultation with the Council's employees and (iii) based on 'no objection' being raised by a majority of employees this policy and procedure be approved.
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**FP2410.6 LICENCES.**

Members noted the licences identified within the report that had been issued for events, works and access on land owned by the Council.

**FP2410.7 OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE.**

Members noted the report from the Operations Officer on the management and maintenance of the open spaces. Cllr Taylor requested that the information contained within the report be included on the Council’s website, as it highlights the various activities involved in managing the open spaces.

Members considered a request from the owner of land adjacent to the council owned public open space on Newnham Drive to install wooden-topped security bollards with reinforced metal edges on the public open space to extend the security measures that they have installed to secure their own land. Members concurred that they were supportive of a more natural solution to prevent future unlawful access to the public open spaces, and it was

<b>RESOLVED:</b>	That the Council declines the offer from the landowner to part fund the addition of security bollards, with the Council proceeding with a more natural solution to prevent unlawful access to the public open space on Newnham Drive.
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**FP2410.8 PLAY AREA – THE HOLLOW.**

Members referred to the report from the Play Area Working Group which provided an update on the first phase of the project, which focussed on the feasibility of establishing a play area for children young people and families to enjoy located on the Hollow, members concurred that they were supportive of creating an adventure play area for all groups, and it was

<b>RECOMMENDED</b>	That the Council approve a budget of up to £500k for a project to create an adventure play area for all age groups.
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**FP2410.9 TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES – BUILDING MAINTENANCE.**

The Chief Officer advised that the three external doors at the rear of the building needed replacing but suggested that it would be beneficial to replace these doors alongside the windows to the front and rear of the building. The CO advised that the decision on the replacement of the doors be deferred until a full report on the replacement of both the doors and windows could be presented to members for consideration.

**FP2410.10 FINANCIAL REPORTS.**

Members referred to the financial reports and the Chair confirmed they had seen the bank statements and reconciled the balances.

<b>RESOLVED:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) That the Council budget/income and expenditure report for September 2024 be received.</li> <li>(ii) That the statement of Earmarked Reserves for September 2024 be received.</li> <li>(iii) That the CIL receipts and expenditure report be received.</li> <li>(iv) That the statement of balances and reconciliation as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be approved and signed.</li> <li>(v) That the schedule of payments for the period 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024 be approved and signed.</li> <li>(vi) It was noted that there were no petty cash payments, inter account transfers or virement for the period 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to 14<sup>th</sup> October 2024.</li> </ul>
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**FP2410.11 COMMITTEE BUDGET 2025/2026.**

The Responsible Finance Officer presented the draft Finance, Policy and Assets budget for 2025/2026.

The RFO highlighted that the wages and salaries budget would be reviewed by the Personnel Panel and a report submitted for approval by full council. The RFO reminded members that the NJC pay award for 2024/2025 was yet to be finalised and the current calculation for 2025/2026 included the assumption of a 5% increase in the budget for 2024/2025, and an additional 5% increase for 2025/2026.

The RFO suggested an increase of £1660 for Legal & Professional Fees be included to provide scope for the council to include enhanced professional advice in Employment Law, Human Resources and Health & Safety.

The RFO evidenced that an increase of £4,600 was needed for Office and IT infrastructure and associated set-up services, as five computers needed to be replaced. Members acknowledged the rationale and requested costs also be included for replacing the Council's audio-visual presentation equipment.

The RFO advised that an increase of £1,100 for Training, to provide the necessary budget for all councillors proceeding the May 2025 elections to complete the NCALC Foundation level Councillor Development Framework.

The RFO reminded members that the three indexation elements which form part of the calculation for the annual increase that will apply to the environmental and landscaping services for 2025/2026 had yet to be confirmed, and the figure included in the draft budget was an estimate, as the official figures not yet being published and agreed.

The RFO suggested the introduction of a budget line of £15,000 to build up reserves for future provision/replacement of play equipment.

The RFO asked members to note that the budget line for the PSCO sponsorship of £45,981 had been removed for 2025/2026 and that an increase of £3,700 had been included to fund the retail crime initiative, as, it had been partly funded by earmarked reserves in 2024/2025.

Members noted that each committee was due to review their separate budgets throughout October and November and that the full draft Council budget and precept for 2025/2026 would be presented to the Finance, Policy & Assets Committee for consideration.

<b>RESOLVED:</b>	That the draft Finance, Policy & Assets Committee budget for 25/26 be approved, in principle, for consideration within the Council budget
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**FP2410.12 CORRESPONDENCE.**

None.

**FP2410.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

The meeting closed at 19:46 hrs

SIGNED .....  ..... DATED .....  .....

