

**Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting**

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**This meeting was held via video conference under the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) 2020**

**Present:** Cllrs David Owens (Chair), Linda Edwards, Peter Freeman, John Hedley Jones, Andrew Phillips, Hugh Shepardson, Bob Walpole

**Officers:** Huw Thomas (Clerk/RFO), Shân Loudon (Deputy Clerk)

**Minute taker:** Ed Davies (Administrative Assistant)

2pm – 3.17pm

**1. To receive apologies for absence**

None received.

**2. To receive members' declarations of interest**

Agenda item	Councillor	Interest
6	Peter Freeman	Personal and prejudicial – is a member of the Pembrey Community Growin g Association (PCGA)

**3. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meeting held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Cllr Bob Walpole **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

Cllr Linda Edwards stated her abstention in the above vote as she had not been present at the meeting.

**4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes**

None were raised.

**5. Consideration of budget monitoring report**

The Clerk/RFO guided members through the high level report first before drawing attention to the larger items for each committee in turn. It was noted that these figures did not constitute the final position for the year as end-of-year processes had not yet been concluded.

Facilities & Assets

Overall this budget stood at 108.9% due to a large number of unbudgeted expenses including the provision of toilets at the harbour, the cemetery gates and structural repairs to the Memorial Institute. It was noted that a decision had been taken on each of these additional expenses with

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approval from this Committee at the time. The Clerk/RFO advised that some funding had been secured for some of the items which masked the savings made in other areas of this budget.

Finance, Governance & Personnel

The overriding additional expense in this area was due to the organisational structure being different to what had been budgeted for. There had also been additional IT software costs, alongside licences and support for remote users.

Regeneration & Community Engagement

The income and expenditure balanced out evenly on community support which was aided by the reduced spending on flowers and events aiding the overall position.

Overall

The Clerk/RFO reported that the budget stood at 95.67% but that he expected the overall net figure to end marginally over budget. He reminded members that a lot of work had been completed in the last 6 months with lots of compulsory and essential works contributing to increased expenses.

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that the report be accepted. **RESOLVED.**

**6. Update on asset transfers**

Copperworks sale

A few minor issues regarding contents and documentation remained but the Clerk/RFO was hopeful of completion within the deadline imposed by the Facilities & Assets Committee.

Pembrey Memorial Hall lease and lands

The solicitor was still awaiting a response from the County Council on the wording of some clauses. The Clerk/RFO **AGREED** to contact the solicitor to ensure they had written to PCGA.

**ACTION: Clerk/RFO**

**7. Update on working arrangements**

There were no changes from the previous month to report.

The Clerk/RFO highlighted that with the Kickstart scheme due to start soon there would likely be a need to retain one of the vans on hire to allow transport of all of the kickstarters. This would be raised with the Facilities & Assets Committee in due course.

Members were reminded of what the Kickstart scheme was and the benefits for both the Council and the kickstarters. It was requested that the document prepared by the CDO outlining how the scheme would be delivered be circulated to members.

**ACTION: CDO**

Members noted that a discussion would need to take place soon on the possibility of the Council meeting physically again.

**8. Update on risk assessment**

The Clerk/RFO stated that he was working to upload the existing financial risk assessment documentation into the software package the council was now using to streamline the systems and process the Council had in place.

**9. Update on PWLB loan**

The Clerk/RFO was pleased to confirm that the Council had received the authority to borrow up to £350,000 from Public Works Loan Board. He was awaiting for the Major Projects Sub-Committee to meet to give their input on the phasing of the drawing down.

It was noted that the time limit on the authority to draw down the loan was until 31/03/22, any extension would require further approval from the Welsh Government.

**10. Update on appraisals**

Members noted that the process had begun with senior staff who would then begin the process with the staff in their team. The Clerk/RFO confirmed he was happy with the appraisal documentation and process approved by the Committee. It was noted that once the process was complete then it was within the terms of reference for this Committee to look at the development needs of staff.

**11. Review of terms of reference prior to Annual Meeting**

Members noted that following the disbanding of the Chairs Committee some of their terms of reference had forced additional changes to this Committee’s terms.

Members noted the changes. It was clarified that an existing precedent would apply regarding the line management of the Clerk/RFO, namely that in the absence of the Chair of this Committee the Vice Chair would act on their behalf.

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the alterations be approved and recommended for approval at the Annual Meeting. **RESOLVED.**

**ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk**

**12. Preparations for submissions to internal auditor/Auditor General**

Members heard that the deadline for submission is 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 but it would need signing off by the Council before then. The Clerk/RFO stated he was going through the year-end processes and was arranging to discuss the submissions with the internal auditor before bringing it to the Ordinary Meeting in June. He stated he was confident the submissions would be made on time.

Members noted the work done to ensure a more robust audit trail regarding Council decisions and actions.

It was noted also that the planned start for a new process regarding the external audit being done by the Auditor General had been postponed by 12 months in light of the pandemic.

**13. Update on pay progression**

The Clerk/RFO confirmed that he had not yet been received any information on the pay progression scales.

**14. Any referred matters from other Committees**

None received.

**15. Any other urgent matters at the discretion of the Chair**

Members noted the insurance proposal that had been distributed via email as an urgent matter earlier in the day. The Clerk/RFO stated that he needed a decision from this Committee on renewal.

The premiums quoted by the broker for staying with the Council's current provider was £12,989.16 for a 1-year agreement or £11,233.95 per year on a 3-year LTA.

The Clerk/RFO stated that as the agreement would be with the broker rather than the insurer. He confirmed that the set budget was sufficient to meet the quoted premiums being offered.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the Committee accept the 3-year agreement as outlined in the document. **RESOLVED**.

**ACTION: Clerk/RFO**

Members discussed the changes made to the Standing Orders and noted that they had been brought more in line with the NALC base document in terms of ordering and that in future years the alterations would be easier to follow. The work of the Deputy Town Clerk in particular was noted and praised.

Members also commented favourably on the large volume of work the staff were achieving for each Committee and beyond.

Members discussed the appointment of Chairs of Committee and the procedure involved.

Cllr Hugh Shepardson **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole that for preference this Committee would decide and appoint its own Chair as opposed to the Annual Meeting. **RESOLVED**.

Cllr Linda Edwards **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Andrew Phillips for the meeting to proceed in camera. **RESOLVED**.

*In camera* - That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

No separate in camera minute produced.

**16. To confirm the in camera minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel meeting held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting. **RESOLVED**.

Cllr Linda Edwards stated her abstention in the above vote as she had not been present at the meeting.

**17. To consider schedule of accounts**

Cllr Peter Freeman **PROPOSED**, seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the Committee accept the schedule. **RESOLVED**.

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**18. Consideration of outstanding invoices**

Members noted an update on one outstanding invoice. No action required.

Members **AGREED** to put on the agenda a review of the processes of lease agreements for Council tenants.

**ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk**

**19. Update on staffing issues**

There was no update.

Following discussion members **AGREED** for the next meeting to take place on the second Tuesday of the month and to review the schedule at that meeting.

**ACTION: Deputy Town Clerk**

Meeting ended 3.17pm