

Minutes of the **FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**
held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **WEDNESDAY, 21st**
FEBRUARY 2024 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor T Foster (Town Mayor) – Chair

Councillor M Bonfield
Councillor C Moreton
Councillor W Trite
Councillor M Whitwam

Also in attendance: -

Dr M Ayres Town Clerk
Miss A Spencer Finance Manager

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillors Bishop, Harris and Tomes.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

3. **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

(a) **Income and Expenditure Account Q3 2023/24**

Consideration was given to a report setting out the Council's financial position at the end of the third quarter of the financial year and forecast year-end position.

It was noted that at the end of Q3 the Council had a surplus on the general fund of £294k, being £70k above budget.

It was reported that additional income from investments of £84k had been appropriated to an earmarked reserve, as per the reserves policy. It was further reported that some repairing works could roll over into the next financial year. Members noted the contents of the report.

(b) **Capital Programme Monitoring Report**

A Capital Programme Monitoring Report for the third quarter of 2023/24 was submitted for information and the contents noted. It was reported that two projects had been completed, with all other projects ongoing. The contents of the report were noted.

4. **TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO**

Members discussed a briefing note prepared by the Finance Manager outlining the need to give consideration to withdrawing funds in a phased programme from the Council's strategic investments, with a view to financing the capital programme. It was acknowledged that the investment portfolio was heavily weighted towards the CCLA property fund and that this fund should be the first fund to be drawn down, in part, due to the withdrawal notice period of 6 months.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Bonfield, seconded by Councillor Moreton and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

To approve the withdrawal of 1/5th of the units held in the CCLA Property Fund and to review further withdrawals periodically.

5. **TO REVIEW TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

The Finance Manager presented the draft Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statement 2024/25 (TMISS). It was reported that the TMISS would usually be submitted with the Estimates papers in January. However it was noted that the draft TMISS had been delayed while the development of an ESG policy was ongoing.

Following a meeting with the Council's treasury advisors, Arlingclose, it was agreed to incorporate the wording as per the TMISS template issued by Arlingclose. This would be reviewed on an annual basis but the ESG criteria for new investments was deemed adequate. The decrease in the level of reserves that were estimated to be available for investment purposes was noted as resulting in a balance of £0.85m due to the funding of the capital programme over the period of the strategy. The expansion of the section on borrowing was also noted.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Trite and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

TO RECOMMEND:

That the draft Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Statement 2024/25 be approved and adopted.

6. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

The following matters were listed as matters for forthcoming agendas.

- (a) Civility and Respect Pledge
- (b) Vexatious Correspondence Policy
- (c) Medium Term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2026/27
- (d) Update on Action Points from Internal Audit Report 2022/23
- (e) National Non-Domestic Rates - Members were provided with an update with regards to the ongoing check/challenge process being undertaken on various hereditaments with the Valuation Office Agency. Further information was provided regards to the refund of payments made on the Spa beach huts. It was noted that a full report on reductions/increases in rating valuations as a result of this process would be made to a future committee meeting once the check/challenge processes have been completed.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next scheduled meeting was 13th March 2024. However, following discussion it was agreed to reschedule the meeting to 20th March 2024.

The meeting concluded at 10.20 a.m.
