



The Old Courthouse,
Jaycroft Road,
Burnham on Sea,
TA8 1LE

30th January 2024

To: All Members of the Finance and Resources Committee

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO ATTEND a meeting of the **FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** to be held on **5th February 2024** in the Council Chamber, Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Road, TA8 1LE at **7.00 pm** for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda below.

All members of the public are welcome to attend.

Building doors will be open at 6:45pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K Noble", written on a white background.

Katherine Noble
Town Clerk

Please contact the Town Council reception (01278 788088) if you need further information on this agenda.

Members of the Finance and Resources Committee

Councillor R. Baker
Councillor P. Clayton
Councillor A. Elrick
Councillor M. Facey
Councillor G. Gudka (Chair)
Councillor R. Keen

Councillor A. Matthews
Councillor B. Metcalfe
Councillor S. Perry
Councillor C. Searing
Councillor B. Vickers

Public participation

A public participation session will now be held before the meeting starts. Anyone wishing to speak on any matters is encouraged to give notice of the request and subject matter to the Town Clerk no later than midday on the last working day prior to the meeting. Public participation shall be restricted to the public participation session, unless directed otherwise by the Chair. In accordance with standing orders the public participation time will not exceed 15 minutes in total with no individual speaker exceeding 3 minutes.

Finance and Resources Meeting Agenda 5th February 2024

131.0.F24 Apologies for absence

132.0.F24 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

133.0.F24 To receive and approve the minutes of the Finance and Resources meeting held on 23rd January 2024

134.0.F24 Matters arising from previous minutes

135.0.F24 To receive for information minutes of sub-committees

136.0.F24 To receive the Chairs report

137.0.F24 To consider cancelling the pre-paid card and replacing it with a government procurement card

138.0.F24 To consider cemeteries waste services quotations and award contract

139.0.F24 To review and adopt the Statement of Internal Control

140.0.F24 To review the Grant Award Policy & Procedure

141.0.F24 To review and adopt the Annual Investment Strategy

142.0.F24 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for 18th March 2024 at 7 pm.



Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 23rd January 2024 in the Council Chamber, The Old Courthouse, Jaycroft Road, Burnham-on-Sea at 7 pm

Present: Councillors G. Gudka (Chair), P. Clayton, M. Facey, R. Keen, A. Matthews, S. Perry, C. Searing, B. Vickers

In attendance: K. Noble (Town Clerk), N. Brookes (RFO), Councillor Millard and four members of the public.

Public Participation

A representative from the Men's Shed spoke in regards to item 129.0.F24 and gave some background information regarding the request for monies towards a defibrillator and answered questions raised.

118.0.F24 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Baker and Metcalfe.

119.0.F24 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

Councillor Keen declared an interest in item 129.0.F24 by virtue of being a member of the Men's Shed.

120.0.F24 To receive and approve the minutes of the Finance and Resources Committee meeting held on 27th November 2023 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 15th January 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 27th November 2023 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 15th January 2024 were presented by the Chairman.

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2023 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 15th January 2024 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

121.0.F24 Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

122.0.F24 To receive for information minutes of sub-committees

No meetings had taken place.

123.0.F24 To receive the Chairs report

There were no items raised.

Signed by chair.....

date.....



124.0.F24 To note the income and expenditure and earmarked reserves reports up to end of December 2023

Some queries were raised and answered. It was noted that the Christmas lights payments have yet to be made. The report was noted.

125.0.F24 To approve the bank reconciliation for December 2023

Resolved the bank reconciliation was approved and signed by the Chairman.

126.0.F24 To review draft 2024/25 budget and precept examples and make a recommendation to Council

The budget papers were reviewed again, following amendments agreed at the Extrordinary meeting held on 15th January.

Somerset Council had advised that charges for litter bins to be emptied would not be made this year.

Several queries were raised and answered.

Committee Chairs had met and reviewed the earmarked reserves and made some suggested changes, which were agreed with no further amendments.

The general reserves were anticipated to be in the region of £370,000 at year end, which is on the lower side of the recommended amount.

Resolved that the following amendments are made to the budget;

4395 – New equipment/furniture – Delete reducing budget by £1,000

4260 – CCTV cameras – Reduce by £1,000

Resolved that the Finance and Resources Committee recommends to Council to accept the budget of £1,070,926 for 2024/25. The recommendation for the Precept request is £952,901, with no reserves to be used.

127.0.F24 Review the Risk Management Policy

The policy has been updated to reflect changes in processes and will be reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Resolved that the updated Risk Management Policy be adopted.

128.0.F24 To consider the interim Internal Audit Report

The recommendations were reviewed and an update was given.

Investment Strategy – a report would be considered at the next Finance & Resources Committee meeting.

Contracts – historically not all documents and a full review is being undertaken.



Invoice checks – although checks were being made, they were not documented sufficiently and a new process has now been implemented.

Risk Register – reviewed earlier in meeting and schedule for a quarterly review.

Allotments – Updated agreements and invoices will be sent out during the renewal period.

Invoices not paid – The RFO has implemented a new procedure and debtors are followed up on a monthly basis.

129.0.F24 To consider a request from The Men’s Shed for a contribution towards the purchase of a defibrillator

(Councillor Keen left the meeting at this juncture)

Although some fundraising had taken place, £475 was required to purchase a defibrillator. The current grants budget balance is £344.

Resolved that the Committee agreed to meet half the cost of the purchase of the defibrillator. £375 to be taken from the grants budget, monies to be released subject to completion of the grant application process.

130.0.F24 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee will be held on 5th February 2024 at 7 pm.



Report for councillors: **Procurement card**

Issued to: **Finance & Resources – 5th February 2024**

1. Purpose of Report

To approve the use of a government procurement card instead of the pre-paid card that is currently in use at Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council.

2. Background

For smaller immediate purchases (under £500) Burnham-on-Sea & Town Council has historically been using a pre-paid card from Cashplus Bank. At present we have in use two cards of this nature, one for the Town Council and one for The Princess Theatre. Purchases are authorised by the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Theatre Manager respectively. This year we have experienced some fraudulent transactions on this card and whilst this has been dealt with and the full amount refunded it has highlighted the current risk of fraud, theft.

3. Recommendation

To switch use of the Cashplus Bank pre-paid card to a Barclaycard Government Procurement card. These cards are used widely by many other City and Town Councils and is generally the preferred method of purchasing and paying for low value goods or services. It allows for increased control of spending through transaction verification processes.

Report for councillors: Cemeteries Waste Contract

**Issued to: Finance and Resources Committee
Meeting - 05/02/2024**

Purpose of Report

For members to consider quotations and agree a contract for the provision of waste services for the Town Councils three cemeteries.

Background

The Town Councils current waste supplier is being reviewed to ensure the Council is getting best value, as this has not been undertaken for a few years.

The need is for the supply of 1 x 1100L waste bin in each cemetery for mixed recycling to be emptied on a fortnightly basis.

Options B and C charge for duty of care and charge for excess weight over 60kg.

Option A provides free duty of care and no excess charge.

Financial Implications

The Town Council are currently paying £138 a month to empty 3 waste containers. Plus £0.17p for excess weight.

Company	Duty of care charge	Lift rate per container per empty	Excess cost per KG	Total Annual Cost	Contract
A	Free	£21	0.00	£756	No contract
B	£102 annually	£23 includes up to 60kg per container	0.16p	£930	No contract
C	£82.60	£18.48	0.18	£747.88	1 year rolling contract



**Burnham-on-Sea
& Highbridge**
TOWN COUNCIL

Recommendation

The recommendation is for Company A to be award the contract, as it is the cheapest overall including any excess KG costs, free duty of care and it provides everything that the Council requires.

Elaine Dutton - Deputy Clerk

January 2024



BURNHAM-ON-SEA & HIGHBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

(adopted by Finance and Resources Committee on XX)

1. Scope of Responsibility

Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council is a Local Authority funded largely by public money. It is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the Council's functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk. The Council is required, by regulation 6.1 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, to review each financial year the effectiveness of its system of financial control.

2. The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3. The Internal Control Environment

The Council

- The Council has adopted Financial Regulations which set parameters for the Council's financial operations.
- The Council has appointed a Chairman (Mayor) who is responsible for the smooth running of meetings and for ensuring that all Council decisions are lawful, and in accordance with its Standing Orders.

- The Council meets at least six times per year to monitor and review its obligations, aims and objectives, and receive reports from the Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer, Committees and Members of the Council.
- The Council has appointed Committees who monitor progress against objectives and budgets.
- The Finance and Resources Committee monitors financial systems and procedures, budgetary control and regularly reviews financial matters.
- The Council meet in January to approve the budget and precept for the coming year.
- The Council carries out regular reviews of its internal controls, systems and procedures.
- Payroll is processed by an external payroll provider using Iris Payroll Software and checked by the Responsible Finance Officer.
- Banking services are provided by Natwest & Nationwide.
- The Council uses a computerised accounting system Rialtas to complete the management accounts and financial returns for the Council.

Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

The Council has appointed a Town Clerk who acts as the Council's advisor and manager. The Council has appointed a separate officer to act as the Responsible Financial Officer who advises on financial related issues and is responsible for the administration of the Council's finances.

The duties of the Town Clerk/RFO are laid down in a Job Description which is reviewed from time to time.

The Town Clerk is responsible for advising on the day to day compliance with laws and regulations that the Council is subject to and for managing risks. The Town Clerk also provides advice to help the Council ensure that its procedures, control systems and policies are adhered to.

The Responsible Finance Officer acts as the Council's advisor and administrator on financial activities in accordance with the approved financial procedures. The RFO checks, processes, updates and retains all relevant documents relating to finance in accordance with best practice (Annual Return, VAT Returns, PAYE/NIC information, Fixed Asset register, accounts and supporting information).

The Town Clerk/RFO submits all the requested information to the Internal and External Auditor by the required date and arranges for the public notices to be displayed. The Town Clerk/RFO maintain, review and update the Councils financial risk assessments.

Payments

All expenditure must be authorised by the Council or by a Committee having delegated authority or (in accordance with the Financial Regulations) by other delegated authority.

All payments from the Council's banks accounts are only to be made with dual authorisation of online payments.

All payments are reported to the Council or Finance and Resources Committee. The RFO is responsible for checking the legality of each payment and that payments are within the powers of the Council prior to presentation to the Council.

Risk Assessments/Risk Management

The Council carries out regular risk assessments in respect of actions and regularly reviews its systems and controls. The insurance cover is regularly reviewed to ensure the correct level of cover has been provided.

Internal Auditor

The Council has appointed Hillside Business Services as Independent Internal Auditor who reports to the Council on the adequacy of:

- records
- procedures
- systems of internal control
- regulations
- risk management
- governance processes

The effectiveness of internal audit is reviewed annually by the Council.

External Auditor

The Council's external auditors PKF Littlejohn, appointed by SAAA Ltd submit an annual certificate of audit which is presented to the Council.

Professional Advice

Additionally, the Council seeks and receives appropriate property, legal, insurance, VAT, personnel/human resources and health & safety advice as appropriate to manage risk.

4. Review of Effectiveness

The Council has responsibility for conducting an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- The Finance and Resources Committee.
- The work of officers reporting to the Council and its Committees.
- The Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to the Council who are responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal control environment and managing risk.
- The Independent Internal Auditor who reviews the Council's system of internal control and reports to the Council.
- The Council's External Auditor who makes a final check using the Annual Return, a form completed and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer, the Chairman, the Town Clerk and the Internal Auditor. An Audit Certificate is issued.
- The number of significant issues that are raised during the year

5. Significant Internal Control Issues

No significant internal control issues were identified during the financial year.

Whilst no significant internal control issues were identified during the year the Council strives for the continuous improvement of the system it has adopted at all times.

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Burnham-on-Sea & Highbridge Town Council

Grant Awards Policy & Procedure

Adopted on 13th March 2023

To be reviewed annually

The Town Council welcomes grant applications and through applying strict criteria we ensure that public funds are used to benefit residents of the community of Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge.

Each year the Council will budget for making grants and the Finance and Resources Committee will consider and allocate the awards.

Applications will be considered at least twice per year.

The maximum amount of a grant application is usually capped at £2,500 unless it is clear that the project would benefit a large amount of our residents. Where this is the case the Chairman and RFO will review the application prior to subsequent referral to the Committee.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must:

- Have a written governing document (for example, a constitution, memorandum and articles of association, set of rules or trust deed).
- Have at least three members on your management committee/board.
- Have a bank or building society account in the name of the organisation.
- Be a community, voluntary or charitable organisation that works with local communities or with specific groups of people including older people, young people, people with disabilities.
- Have an appropriate safeguarding policy – if you are working with children and young people or vulnerable adults.
- Have an adopted equal opportunities policy or statement.
- Show evidence that the service you provide is needed by the community and that it has community support.
- Schools for special events i.e. for activities not amounting to a core function or on the standard curriculum.
- Grants will only be made to community and voluntary organisations for the benefit of the area covered by Burnham-On-Sea and Highbridge Town Council and that will contribute positively within the parish.

The Council will also consider grants where it feels that to do so will benefit some or all of its residents or some or all of the area e.g. large events.

Grants will not be made to:

- Organisations that discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, age, gender, trans-gender, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy or any disability.
- Private organisations operated as a business to make a profit or surplus.
- “Upward funders”, i.e. local groups whose fund raising is sent to their central HQ for redistribution.
- Organisations who wish to pass on money to other individuals or groups.
- Individuals.

- Political organisations or projects.
- Activities that are completely funded from another funding source.
- Any expenditure incurred or committed before we confirm our grant.
- Loans or interest payments.
- General funding for your organisation or third-party organisations.

What would a grant be given for?

- Capital projects – non-recurring expenditure e.g. purchase of equipment, works to buildings, improvements to premises.
- Revenue grant – towards general running costs for a specific reason.
- A community event.

Grants will not normally be made for ongoing running/core costs e.g.:

- Rent and rates
- Service contracts
- Salaries
- Lease payments

Where an application is for running costs for a project, the applicant should detail the plans to find future running costs from alternative sources. Where grants for running costs are made, no guarantee of future funding is implied.

How will the application be assessed?

- All applications must be completed on the Grants Application Form and accompanied by the required financial and organisational information.
- Applicants may apply only once in any financial year.
- Applications for grants will be considered at the Finance and Resource Committee meetings in April and September.
- The Council would prefer to see evidence that the applicant is in receipt of match funding. Consideration will be given to the overall cost of the project and also to other sources of funding, including a contribution of some of the group's own funds.
- The Town Council welcomes application that demonstrate how one-off grant funding will lead to greater self-sufficiency and lessen the need for future applications.
- The Town Council will only provide one grant per group or organisation in each financial year, unless clear, exceptional circumstances are demonstrated. Grants are awarded for one year only and you should not rely on a grant in future years.
- If the request is for £1,000 or more, the applicant or group members will be required to attend the relevant Committee meeting to answer questions.

- The Responsible Finance Officer will check that all the supporting documentation has met the Council's criteria. Only the application form will be circulated to all members of the Finance and Resources Committee. If any councillor requires access to the background information accompanying the application, they may request this from the Responsible Finance Officer and this will be provided subject to any confidentiality considerations.
- To allow checks to be carried out as to completeness and to obtain any further information that may be necessary, applications must be received 14 working days prior to the Finance and Resources Committee meeting.
- The Committee has the discretion to award a reduced amount from that being requested on the grant application form.
- The Committee will take into account any previous grant made to an organisation or group when considering a new application.
- You will need to complete an End of Grant Report. Evidence of the use of the full grant amount for the agreed purpose must be provided to the Town Council within 2 months of the project being completed/event taking place. Evidence must include the completed End of Grant Form and may also include receipts, photos, reports. Councillors would welcome an invite to see what was achieved with the funding as part of the report. **Should the evidence not be received the Town Council will request the return of the funds.**
- If awarded a grant the Council would welcome an invitation for the Mayor to visit the project and attend any official opening. The Council can assist with the promotion of such events and with press releases.
- Recognition of the grant awarded by Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council must be made in any publicity, with the Town Council logo included on all promotional material.



Annual Investment Strategy

Date Adopted:

Date Amended:

Review Date:

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council (the Council) acknowledges that as part of its fiduciary duty it is important to prudently invest the temporary surplus funds held on behalf of the tax payer.
- 1.2 The Local Government Act 2003 states that a local authority may invest:
 - For any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment.
 - For the purpose of prudent management of its financial affairs.
- 1.3 This Strategy complies with the revised requirements set out in the Department of Communities and Local Government Guidance on Local Government Investments and takes into account Section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003 and guidance within Governance and Accountability for Local Councils Practitioner's Guide 2019.
- 1.4 The Council defines its treasury management activities as “the management of the Council's cash flows, its banking and money market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of best value performance consistent with those risks.”

2 POLICY

- 2.1 This strategy establishes formal objectives, policies and practices and reporting arrangements for the effective management and control of the Council's treasury management activities and the associated risks and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Financial Regulations.

3 INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The Council's mandatory investment priorities are:
 - the security of its reserves, and
 - the adequate liquidity of its investments, and
 - the return on investment – the Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.
- 3.2 All investments will be made in sterling.
- 3.3 The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities maintains that the borrowing of money purely to invest or to lend and make a return is unlawful and the Council will not engage in such activity.
- 3.4 The council will monitor the risk of loss on investments by review of credit ratings on a regular basis. The Council will only invest in institutions of high credit quality – based on information from credit rating agencies.
- 3.5 Investments will be spread over different providers where appropriate to minimise risk.

4 SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS

- 4.1 Specified investments are those offering high security and high liquidity, made in sterling and with a maturity of no more than a year. Such short term investments made with the UK

Government or a local authority or town or parish council will automatically be Specified Investments.

- 4.2 For the prudent management of its treasury balances, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge Town Council will use:
- Deposits with banks, building societies, local authorities or other public authorities
 - Other approved public sector investment funds.
- 4.3 The choice of institution and length of deposit will be at the approval of the Finance & Resources Committee.
- 4.4 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with the proper levels of security and liquidity.

5 NON SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS

- 5.1 These investments have greater potential risk – examples include investment in the money market, stocks and shares. Given the unpredictability and uncertainty surrounding such investments the Council will not use this type of investment.

6 LIQUIDITY OF INVESTMENTS

- 6.1 The Finance & Resources Committee in consultation with the Responsible Finance Officer will determine the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed so as not to compromise liquidity.
- 6.2 Investments will be regarded as commencing on the date the commitment to invest is entered into rather than the date on which the funds are paid over to the counterparty.

7 LONG TERM INVESTMENTS

- 7.1 Long term investments are defined in the Guidance as greater than 12 months.
- 7.2 The Council does not currently hold any funds in long term investments.

8 INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2023-24

- 8.1 For 2023-24 the Council will invest as much of its balances as possible in low risk products in order to achieve its investment objectives.
The investment will be in:
- Nationwide Business 95 Day Saver

9 END OF YEAR INVESTMENT REPORT

- 9.1 The Investment forecasts for the coming financial year were accounted for when the budget was prepared. At the end of the financial year, the Responsible Finance Officer will report on investment activity to the Finance & Resources Committee

10 REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF REGULATIONS

- 10.1 The Annual Investment Strategy must be reviewed annually and revised if considered necessary.
- 10.2 The Council reserves the right to make variations to the Investment Strategy at any time subject to the approval of Council. Any variations will be made available to the public.

11 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- 11.1 In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Council's Investment Strategy will be published on the Town Council's website www.burnham-highbridge-tc.gov.uk and is also available as hard copy from the Town Council Offices.