

DRAYTON PARISH COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on **Thursday 21st March 2024, 7:00pm** at Drayton Parish Council, Pavilion King George V Playing Field, Drayton Highroad, Drayton, Norwich, NR8 6AW

Committee Members: Cllrs J. Anderson, A. Crotch, G. Everett, A. Taylor and S. White

In attendance: Amy Gallant, Assistant Clerk & RFO

Meeting Opened: 7:08pm

MINUTES

1. Apologies and consideration of acceptance for absence

None.

2. Members' declaration of interest and requests for dispensations

None.

3. To approve the minutes of Committee meeting held 7th December 2023

The minutes were **AGREED** as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

4. To allow public participation in accordance with Standing Orders

In response to item 9 of the agenda it was noted that the Council would benefit from the development of a Council Strategy to provide a clear direction of travel with key priorities to support the work of Officers of the Council and Councillors alike.

In response to item 10 of the agenda, support for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group was noted.

5. To receive updates on Committee matters arising from previous meetings

The report was noted by the Committee.

6. To receive the internal control check for Q3 2023 and consider recommendations for action

It was noted that the Payee/Debtor for C.I.L/S106 required updating to read Broadland District Council.

On further review of the Credit Card sample it was **AGREED** to review best practices for adding payments to Scribe to provide further clarity on entries, particularly where there were multiple purchases for one invoice. Recommendations included an updated purchase order form, annual orders for recurring items such as consumables, more detailed descriptions in Scribe and setting up a separate bank account for the credit card in Scribe that the transactions can be recorded against.

ACTION: Assistant Clerk

7. To note statutory updates to Financial Regulations

The update was noted by the Committee.

8. To review Effectiveness of Internal Controls and make recommendations for approval by Council

Recommendations for amendment to the Internal Controls document and statement were **AGREED** as presented for approval by Council. The Committee considered if the Annual Statement required the level of detail contained and agreed to seek advice as part of the Year-End Audit for future iterations.

A discussion followed on the benefits of a Councillor Induction Pack. It was noted that work on an induction pack had been developed by previous Clerks and could be updated following the transition to Microsoft 365. It was recommended to consider Councillor training options with Norfolk Parish Training and Support (NPTS) and to seek examples and possible resources from other Parish Council's and South Norfolk and Broadland District Council.

ACTION: Parish Clerk

9. To consider update to proposal for a Strategy Advisory Group for recommendation for approval by Council

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend to disband the Strategy Working Group and draft a 3-year Action Plan to May 2027 outlining the planned approach for existing projects. The opportunity for revision and input by Committees would be provided before final approval of the action plan by Council.

It was noted that the plan would normally be for 4 years but that the timeframe had been amended to align with the end of the current term of office.

The Committee agreed that a Council Strategy remained an aspiration and that the action plan was a useful tool towards this goal.

10. To consider proposed Terms of Reference for a Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group for recommendation for approval by Council

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Terms of Reference for a Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Group subject to the following amendments; to include up to 8 members of the Parish Council, up to 6 members of the Public, a Council member as Chairman, a quorum of 5 members to include a minimum of 3 members of Council, include 'if necessary' to item 9 under responsibilities.

It was noted that membership would be appointed by the Council and would need to advertise to the public to express interest in membership.

ACTION: Assistant Clerk

11. To consider proposed amendment to Scheme of Delegation

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend the proposed amendment to the Scheme of Delegation as presented subject to inclusion of a quorum of a minimum of two Councillors for all Working Groups and that the Chairman of all Working Group shall be a Council Member.

ACTION: Assistant Clerk

12. To consider recommendation for list of pre-approved contractors (preferred suppliers) which can be used for the supply of routine services and essential maintenance under £3,000

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend amendment to the Financial Regulations as presented for approval by Council subject to replacing “pre-approved contractors” to “preferred suppliers”.

To ensure suppliers remained fit for purpose and continued to provide value for money the list would be included within the Council’s adopted Internal Controls Document for review and update at regular intervals.

It was noted that the use of preferred suppliers was not mandatory and did not prevent Officers of the Council from seeking alternative quotes as required. Financial Regulation 4.1 on budgetary control and authority remained unchanged.

13. Exchange of Information

None.

14. Date and time of next Committee meeting 25th April

Meeting Closed: 8:59pm