



FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting held on Thursday 26th October 2023 at 7pm in the Council Chambers, 10 Melrose Road, West Mersea, Colchester CO5 8JD

In attendance

Cllr. S. Weaver (Chair)	Cllr. B. Jenkins
Cllr. C. Powling	Karen Kuderovitch – Locum Town Clerk

23/1.	<p>RECORDING OF MEETING</p> <p>Chairman requested anyone present to identify their intention to record the meeting. The Town Clerk indicated she was recording.</p>
23/2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>All Members were to be reminded that they must disclose any interests (pecuniary/nonpecuniary) they have in items of business on the meeting's agenda either at this point or during the agenda item. They are reminded that they will need to repeat their declaration at the appropriate point in the meeting and leave the room if the interest is a prejudicial one. Unforeseen interests must be declared similarly at the appropriate time. If not already done so, they are also obliged to notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the meeting. Cllr. Powling – Colchester City Councillor</p>
23/3.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE 🙏</p> <p>Cllr. Jarvis – personal commitment, Cllr. Holmes – no apologies received. A vote was taken to accept the apology and the reason submitted. All in favour.</p>
23/4.	<p>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</p> <p>A period of up to 15 minutes (maximum of 3 minutes per person) for members of the public to ask questions or submit comments about items on the agenda. Priority will be given to those members of the public wishing to share information relating to items on the agenda.</p> <p>MOP1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – made reference to lack of background papers with Agendas, suggesting this therefore limits public participation. – newsletter – asked for indication of the frequency and would it be on the same basis. – Strategy document and Section 106 monies and discussions which took place under the last council in connection to a possible general purpose building at the Glebe – Section 106 – suggested community engagement and public meetings should be held <p>The Mayor responded that there had been a lack of information in connection with finance with a huge backlog which has meant finance information has been very last minute. Cllr. Jenkins stated that there are pots of Section 106 money available. The Mayor advised there was an intention to issue the Newsletter quarterly and lots of positive feedback had been received. The Mayor also advised Section 106 discussions would take place. A suggestion was made that Cllr. Powling had been in discussions with Mersea Homes. Cllr. Powling responded he had not had discussions with Mersea Homes and that Section 106 is listed very clearly in Mersea Homes & City & Country in a document. The discussions would be discussed at a further Council meeting. Mersea Homes had presented the layout of the north side of Glebe 3 and it was currently being updated. Section 106 information from both projects were public and Council would debate and focus on in a separate meeting.</p> <p>MOP 2</p> <p>Concerns raised over planning for significant Section 106 monies and suggested a lack of transparency on finance for projects. Open public consultations were suggested and a clear strategy of what would be prioritised for the island and the community. Pavilion at the Glebe was had been discussed in the previous Council and the need for action at the Glebe Pavilion and the importance of sport for mental health and the economy. A suggestion was made that a multi-use facility had not been made with social functions allied to sport. A need for strategy and</p>

	<p>Council should be leading the debate and suggested a clear view was absent and a need for the strategy to come forward and debate in an open & engaging manner.</p> <p>The Mayor responded that most people present and on the island and that the Pavilion was in a bad state of repair and the loss of the facility was not wanted.</p> <p>MOP3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Referred to a paper submitted to the Town Council & attachment. - Issue of business rates retention scheme – rates paid on e.g. Willoughby car park equated to £500 x 12 months = £6k. CCC retain 40% of that income, £2,400 per year. Cars pay a minimum £4 charge, WMTC receive £1.60 equivalent to 1500 cars needed to pay back that part of the business rates. Suggested an offset of the business rates.
23/5.	<p>MINUTES 🖱</p> <p>The minutes of the Finance and Strategy Meeting held on 8th November 2022 were approved. Proposer: Cllr. Jenkins, Seconder: Cllr. Powling. All in favour.</p>
23/6.	<p>FINANCE REPORT</p> <p>The Town Clerk had not had sufficient time to issue a consolidated report, but would advise under each section of Agenda item 23/7. The Town Clerk stated that with the absence of a Clerk from April – July 2023, there had been many issues to address, including External Audit queries. The Town Clerk acknowledged the current lack of finance information on the web site. A new Finance web page was being created. An interim internal 6 month audit was arranged for Monday 30th October and that had taken a significant amount of time in preparations. Once the internal audit had been completed, the focus would be on the Finance web page. Cllr. Jenkins enquired about the progress of bank signatories. The Town Clerk stated she could not be recognised on bank accounts at present as she was a Locum. The Town Clerk advised that a temporary member of staff could not be named on bank accounts. A general discussion took place about banks and signatories/project allocations.</p>
23/7.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Review of 6 month running budget. Members reviewed the document provided. Cllr Jenkins & the Town Clerk had met and made progress with the budget (cost centre code allocation). The Town Clerk provided a report on expenditure items that need to be allocated to a budget since the start of the financial year & cost centre codes allocated. The Town Clerk & Cllr. Jenkins to meet to complete for full council approval. The Town Clerk hoped to be in a position to report in full at the December Town Council meeting. 2) All completed transactions – agreed payments and costed project invoices not yet processed but orders placed (list to be provided) – Town Clerk reported all invoice had been paid up to date. 3) Review of debtors – some recent cemetery invoices o/s £2,806 to be chased for payment. MISA payments received 18/4/23 £1,600 and on 17/7/23 of £2,000. Tennis Club 12/5/23 - £800 – balance outstanding to be paid. Cllr. Jenkins asked for a statement of invoices issued and payments received. The Glebe signage invoices to be issued to the respective sports clubs. A member of the public asked to make a comment. This was agreed and information was shared on the tennis club arrangement after upgrading of the tennis courts. The Town Clerk to check the invoices issued. Gate licences/allotment invoices issued to be checked. 4) Review of creditors – Town Clerk reported none identified at present. The Town Clerk to check the history of donations and ensure they have been paid. 5) Review of 24/25 price/cost increases – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) allotment lease – currently £1,100 per quarter. Increase due on 1st January 2024. Recommendation to full council, 5% was proposed by Cllr. Jenkins and seconded by Cllr. Powling. All in favour. b) allotment fees – Recommendation to full council, 5% increase up to nearest 50p proposed by Cllr. Jenkins, seconded by Cllr. Weaver. All in favour. Recommendation to full council. c) gate licences – the Town Clerk reported 3/11/22 increase was 5% £32, £58 double. Cllr. Jenkins proposed 5% increase up to nearest 50p, seconded by Cllr. Weaver. All in favour. Recommendation to full council. d) burials - the Town Clerk to consult with the Cemetery Clerk for her recommendations ready for 1/4/24 implementation. A comparison to also be provided. e) car park charges – increased by a third last time from £6.50 to £8.50 (full day), with a lower charge of £4 for main car park for 2 hours. 1 hour free period for library car park. Cllr. Jenkins proposed a freeze on charges, seconded by Cllr. Powling. All in favour. Recommendation to full council.



	<p>A member of the public asked to be heard – this was permitted. Suggestion of season tickets to residents in addition to beach hut owners.</p> <p>6) Ideas for any new projects to be included in the budget for 24/25 – junction markings/white lining. Essex County Council had not taken any action. Cllr. Powling proposed a budget for £8,000 to address future issues/outstanding junctions needing urgent attention. Cllr. Powling proposed £4,000 for footpath maintenance. Essex County Council had abolished the Highway Rangers service. Cllr. Powling proposed £12,000 for bathing rafts (acts as a deterrent for jet skis/speedboats). MMO licence would be required. £4,000 already in the budget so an additional £8,000 to be added. Cllr. Powling proposed a budget of £10,000 for additional compactor bins (working with Colchester City Council matching the cost & installing). All in favour. Cllr. Powling reported on the possibility of a Water Bailiff, working with Colchester City Council, with powers to act. A water bailiff would cost around £45,000 and it was proposed £25,000 be added into the budget and approach Colchester City Council to match fund. Consultation to take place with the various waterfront parties. All in favour. Cllr. Jenkins proposed £5,000 for D-Day 80, including liaison with the local school/British Legion. All in favour. Cllr. Jenkins – newsletters £6,000. £1,000 staff welfare. £1,000 staff welfare. Cllr. Powling proposed an amount of £1,000 for Councillor surgeries. All in favour. All suggestions to be presented to full council for consideration. The Town Clerk asked what budget was set aside for play equipment, and that the play equipment should be more inclusive and consult for views of which type of equipment would be preferred. A discussion took place over further possibility for Changing Places, specifically beach matting & security. The Boardwalk budget to be further discussed at the relevant Committee.</p> <p>7) Project review – costs in financial year 23/24. Town Clerk reported.</p> <p>8) Any projects for which we could get 106 monies for. Cllr. Powling gave a briefing on the uses of S106 for community projects and a brief discussion took place on possible uses. Clerk to investigate with Colchester City Council and report back.</p> <p>9) Strategy document – items 6 and 7 – Cllr. Jenkins reported and members reviewed the progress of various projects.</p> <p>10) Review of Reserves Policy – the Town Clerk thanked Cllr. Jenkins for his assistance and requested the item be deferred. All in favour.</p> <p>The Chairman stated that she would be stepping down from Chairing the Finance & Strategy Committee due to heavy involvement in other Committees. Next agenda for a new Chair to be appointed.</p>
	<p>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC 🙅</p> <p><i>It was RESOLVED that due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the public and press be excluded pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.</i></p>
23/8.	<p>Staffing Budget £</p> <p>A review of expenditure 23/24 was taken.</p>