



ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL

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Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee, 22 March 2022 DRAFT NOTES

Present:

Cllr Samantha Bowring	Chair
Cllr Rawda Jehanli	Chair of Community Advisory committee
Cllr Gabby Barody	Chair of Environment & Amenities Advisory committee
Cllr Andrew Skinner	Chair of Town Infrastructure Advisory committee
Cllr Neil Fawcett	
Cllr Jim Halliday	

In attendance:

Victoria Moore	Properties Officer
Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Susan Whipp	Deputy Town Clerk / RFO (clerk to the meeting)

SECTION I (Open to the Public Including the Press)

FG65. Apologies

Cllr Ulrike Rowbottom gave her apologies before the meeting. Cllr Fawcett gave apologies that he would have to leave at 8.00pm.

FG66. Declarations of interest

Cllrs Samantha Bowring and Neil Fawcett declared an interest in agenda item 16, write offs, as they know, on a personal level, the debtor being discussed.

FG67. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

FG68. Minutes

The notes of the meeting of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee of 18 January 2022 were approved and would be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

It was noted that the request to remove Cllr Halliday's signature from the report on the website had not been completed. [*Update: subsequent to the meeting, this was removed and confirmed to Cllr Halliday*].

FG69. Forward Plan and Actions Register

The committee reviewed the outstanding actions on the Forward Plan:

[*Cllr Rawda Jehanli joined the meeting, the time being 7:05pm*].

It was noted that the timescale for **9. Museum lift options appraisal** did not include all the stages, such as producing a business plan, and it was agreed that these would be added to the forward plan in due course.

The committee reviewed and noted the actions register:

Min G12 – it was agreed by the committee that this action be removed from the actions register and the plans for the Old Magistrates' Court and Robing Room be monitored through the forward plan instead.

Min G21 – it was noted that the comments dated 17.3.22 are misleading: Ridge and Partners LLP have been instructed to assess the repairs required, arising from the recent drainage survey, the wording in the report suggests they would be carrying out the works themselves which is incorrect.

Min FG49 – The town clerk confirmed that the wi-fi upgrade installation works are due to commence on 30 March 2022.

Cllr Bowring queried the deletion of a previous outstanding action regarding the display of art work in the Guildhall historic rooms. It was confirmed this action falls within the remit of the Community Services committee and not FGAM committee.

FG70. Covid Response Working Group

The notes of the Covid Response Working Group meeting of 7 March 2022 were noted.

FG71. Finance report

The committee received and considered a report from the deputy town clerk / RFO.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Halliday, and **recommended to council that the payment listings for 1 January – 28 February 2022 be approved.**

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Jehanli, and **recommended to council that the management accounts for the period ending 28 February 2022 be approved.**

The RFO was thanked for such high quality reports which set out everything so clearly.

FG72. Community Infrastructure Levy

The committee received and considered a report from the deputy town clerk / RFO.

The committee noted the levels of CIL monies received to date.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Jehanli, and **recommended to council that the council continue to receive its share of CIL monies from the Vale of White Horse District Council in two half-yearly instalments.**

FG73. Property matters

The committee received and considered a report from the properties officer.

Cllr Halliday asked for clarification on the purpose of the recent scaffolding near the Guildhall archway. The properties officer explained this was used by the pest control company to transport their materials and equipment, instead of needing to carry through the Guildhall.

Regarding the drainage works, Cllr Halliday warned against the use of pumps. The properties officer agreed that pumps can be problematic and reported that an alternative proposal of using a redundant sewage pipe is currently being considered.

Regarding the guildhall stonework, Cllr Halliday suggested that this work should be commenced as soon as possible, the problem is known to worsen with each winter. The properties officer explained that she is planning for these works to be completed this year.

The committee noted progress on current works.

The committee noted the arrangements in place to temporarily allow the use of the robing room to members of Abingdon's polish community, for the storage of donations to Ukrainian refugees and requested that this be publicised.

FG74. **Strategic Risk Register**

The committee received and considered a report from the deputy town clerk / RFO.

Regarding risks associated with employees working from home, Cllr Halliday reported evidence that the number of cases of repetitive strain injury has increased nationally, and this is linked to incorrect equipment and set up from home working. The deputy town clerk reported that all staff were requested to complete DSE assessments during the first covid lockdown in March 2020 and agreed to ask staff to revisit their assessment regularly.

Cllr Samantha Bowring asked if the risk register should be shared with the other standing committees as the FGAM committee do not have a thorough understanding of all their services and lines of work. The deputy town clerk explained that this is a strategic risk register rather than an operational risk register and captures the overarching risks for the council as a whole rather than any service-specific risks. She reminded the committee that, in line with the council's Terms of Reference, responsibility for the strategic risk register sits with the FGAM committee.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Halliday, and **recommended to council that the strategic risk register as contained in appendix A of the report be approved.**

FG75. **Consultations Policy**

The committee received and considered a report from the town clerk.

The committee discussed whether the policy should (i) assist as a guide for the areas which should be considered when making decisions on the need to consult, or whether (ii) it should be more detailed and prescriptive. The committee voted and option (i) was agreed as the suitable approach as this would allow the policy to be applied to all situations, whereas option (ii) may mean some areas which the committee would like to consult on in the future could be missed from the policy. Members agreed that the parameters for any consultation should be proportionate to both the cost of service being consulted on, and the impact on the community.

It was **recommended to council that the draft consultations policy as contained in appendix A of the report be approved.**

FG76. **Publicity**

Members requested that the use of the robing room for the organising of donations to Ukrainian refugees be publicised.

FG77. Meetings for 2020/21 future meetings

The date of the next meeting of the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee was noted as 21 June 2022.

FG78. Exclusion of the public, including the press

The Chair moved that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

FG79. Confidential Actions Register

The confidential actions register was noted.

FG80. Write offs

The committee received and considered a report from the deputy town clerk / RFO.

It was proposed by Cllr Jehanli, seconded by Cllr Halliday and **recommended to council that the unpaid invoice of £204.00 as contained in confidential report be written off due it being deemed irrecoverable.**

Officers were requested to not accept any further bookings from the individual, unless the payment for such a booking was received in advance, and the individual made a payment of goodwill to reflect the write off.

[Cllr Neil Fawcett left the meeting, the time being 8:00pm].

FG81. Abbey Hall

The committee received and considered a report from the properties officer.

It was **recommended to council that the officer request as per section 3.4 of the confidential report be approved.**

See confidential appendix to these notes.

FG82. Surplus land review

The committee received and considered a report from the town clerk.

It was requested that the appropriate ward member for each area be consulted, prior to any final decisions being agreed.

It was proposed by Cllr Bowring, seconded by Cllr Halliday, and **recommended to**

council that the town clerk's recommendations as per section 3.1 of the confidential report be approved subject to there being no concerns raised by ward members.

See confidential appendix to these notes.

The meeting closed at 2053hrs