



Town Hall, High Street, Corsham, Wiltshire SN13 0EZ

Tel: 01249 702130

Email: towncouncil@corsham.gov.uk

www.corsham.gov.uk

12 October 2017

To: All Members of the Finance and Administration Committee – Councillors S Abbott, P Anstey, Mrs R Hopkinson, M Jackson, D Jarman, D Jones, R Le-Var, N Pocock, R Taylor.

All other Members of the Council for information.

Dear Councillor

The next meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee will be held on Wednesday 18 October 2017 in the Town Hall at 7.30pm.

Yours sincerely

David J Martin
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Public Question Time and Petitions
3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Corsham Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee Meeting held on 16 August 2017 - *for information only*.
5. Grant Applications (Fourth Round) – The grants scheme for 2017/18 is being publicised and three new grant applications have been received for consideration at this meeting. The applications can be viewed in the Town Hall during office hours and will also be available half-an-hour prior to the meeting.

The balances of the grants budgets for 2017/18 are as follows: Grants General (budget heading 102/1260) £1,910 (includes £500 returned by Corsham RFC); Methuen Hall (budget heading 102/1261) £11,250; Arts Centre (budget heading 102/1265) £2,000. There are also earmarked reserves: Grant Reserve Fund (budget heading EMR 347) £9,800, and Grant Tourism/CADT £2,500 (budget heading EMR 361).

There is a limit to the amount the Council can spend where it has no specific Power. This is known as Section 137 expenditure and must be recorded separately in the Town Council's accounts. The limit for 2017/18 is £7.57 per registered elector, which equates to around £73,800. The Council is highly unlikely to reach this figure in any given year. Where grant applications are for activities funded through Section 137, they will be clearly identified on the agenda. There are none for this meeting.

Details of the grant application is as follows:

Awarded 2016/17	Requested 2017/18	Applicant & Purpose
£500*	£500	Corsham RFC – Towards an extraction canopy and ducting system as part of a kitchen upgrade.
£0**	£500**	The Pound Arts Trust – Towards TEDxCorsham event.
£0	£500	Corsham Chamber of Commerce – Towards marketing the 2018 Corsham Business Show.

*The £500 was refunded in June 2017 as the floodlighting project it was awarded for has been deferred.

**The Pound Arts Trust receives £5,000 Town Council funding through a Service Level Agreement. This is a new project led by volunteers.

- *for consideration and decision.*

6. Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts (including the Town Hall) – To consider the financial report – *for review.*
7. Investments (*Minute F&A 09/17*) – Since the Committee meeting on 14 June when it was resolved: ‘*That the Town Council invests up to £50,000 in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund*’, the remaining HSBC bond of £49,999 matured on 4 October 2017. The Public Sector Deposit Fund is AAA rated and has same-day liquidity. The Fund declares a daily yield which averaged 0.1865% for July - September 2017 and it has good ethical values. Further details are available at www.ccla.co.uk. The Town Council invests in CCLA's Local Authority Property Fund for longer-term investments. It is recommended that £50,000 be invested in the CCLA Public Deposit Fund in addition to the current fund – *for approval.*

8. The 2018-19 Local Government Finance Settlement, Technical Consultation Paper (DCLG) – The Government is consulting on proposals for the local government finance settlement for 2018-19. (See attached or visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645012/2018-19_Local_Government_Finance_Settlement_-_technical_consultation.pdf). Section 4.2 covers Council Tax Referendum Principles for town and parish councils and states: ‘Last year, the Government issued a challenge to town and parish councils to demonstrate restraint when setting precept increases that are not a direct result of taking on additional responsibilities, and to make precept decisions more transparent to local tax-payers. The continuation of this position in 2018-19 is contingent upon the Government receiving clear evidence of how the sector is responding to this challenge. The Government expects parishes, in setting their precepts, to consider all available options to mitigate the need for council tax increases, including the use of reserves where they are not already earmarked for particular purposes or for “invest to save” projects which will lower on-going revenue costs. Any revised proposals will be set out at the time of the provisional local government finance settlement later in the year.’

The statement raises a few issues and concerns including: precept decisions are already transparent and always made in public; the lack of methodology for showing the impact of taking over additional responsibilities would make it difficult to determine the exact level of increase, and the suggestion of using reserves to reduce council tax increases is not financially sustainable.

It is recommended that the Town Council responds to the consultation, highlighting the concerns raised – *instructions requested*.

9. Disqualification Criteria for Councillors and Mayors, Consultation of Updating Disqualification Criteria for Local Authority Members (DCLG) – The Government is consulting on changing the criteria for disqualifying Councillors (see attached or visit https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/645454/Disqualification_criteria_for_councillors_and_mayors.pdf). The proposed changes include disqualifying individuals from standing or holding office if they are subject to:

- the notification requirements set out in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (commonly referred to as ‘being on the sex offenders register’);
- a civil injunction granted under section 1 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; or
- a Criminal Behaviour Order made under section 22 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The proposed changes would not act retrospectively. Page 16 of the consultation has a series of questions which the Committee is asked to consider – *for consideration*.

10. Internal Audit Report 2017/18 (Interim) - A copy of the report from the interim visit is attached. The internal auditor has not raised any issues or made any recommendations.

Recommendation

That the Internal Audit Report 2017/18 (Interim) be noted.

11. Appointment of Internal Auditors 2018/19 – Formal note of an appointment of internal auditors is required. Auditing Solutions Ltd has provided a satisfactory service since being appointed several years ago and are familiar with the Town Councils processes and procedures.

Recommendation

That Auditing Solutions Ltd be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditors for 2018/19.

12. Annual Insurance Review (*Minute F&A 30/16*) – The Chief Executive has completed the Annual Insurance Review and no issues or concerns have been identified. The insurance cover was re-tendered in 2016 and the cover is reviewed monthly to ensure that any significant new assets or risks are covered. There is still one pending insurance claim relating to Meriton Recreation Ground which is due to go to court in early 2018. The Council's insurers and their solicitors are supporting the Town Council over the matter – *for information/comment*.
13. Strategic Plan Monitoring and Evaluation (*Minute F&A 19/17 and others*) – The attached Monitoring and Evaluation sheet provides details of all the actions within the Strategic Plan themes covered by the Finance and Administration Committee (along with related actions which are monitored by other Committees/Council for information) – *for information and comment*.