



# MINUTES

## Finance and Democracy Committee

<b>Date:</b>	Monday, 13 September 2021
<b>Venue:</b>	Town Hall, St Annes.
<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Councillor Karen Buckley (Chairman) Councillor Vince Settle (Vice Chairman)  Councillors Peter Anthony, Alan Clayton, Peter Collins, Ellie Gaunt, Noreen Griffiths, Linda Nulty, David O'Rourke, Richard Redcliffe, John Singleton JP, Michael Withers.
<b>Other Councillors Present:</b>	None
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Allan Oldfield, Paul Walker, Alex Scrivens and Sharon Wadsworth
<b>Other Attendees:</b>	None

### Public Platform

There were no speakers under public platform on this occasion.

#### 1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. There were no declarations of interests on this occasion.

#### 2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Finance and Democracy Committee meeting held on 29 July 2021 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

#### 3. Substitute Members

The following substitutions were reported under Council procedure rule 23 (c):

Councillor Alan Clayton substituted for Councillor Liz Oades  
Councillor Noreen Griffiths substituted for Councillor Elaine Silverwood.

### Decision Items

#### Urgent Item –

The chairman was of the opinion that, by reason of special circumstances this item should be considered as a matter of urgency, pursuant to section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972. It was considered urgent due to the urgency to award the contract to the preferred bidder in relation to the likely deadlines for submission of the Levelling Up bids.

Mr Walker, Director of Development Services, advised members that a tendering exercise and evaluation process had been completed to provisionally select a consultant to complete the required surveys and consultation before

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the end of October 2021. The Council had to observe a 10-day standstill period, which was a legal requirement of the Public Contract Regulations 2015, which ended on the 23 September 2021 when the Council could then formally award the contract.

The urgency to delegate authority to the Director of Development Services was to ensure that the consultants could complete the overall commission in time for deadlines for the second round of Levelling Up bids in 2022 that had yet to be announced by Government. The delay in waiting until the next available meeting of the Finance and Democracy committee increased the risk of the details of the bid being incomplete when the funding rounds opened up.

Following a brief discussion, it was RESOLVED:

1. The committee agreed that the item be included on the agenda as an urgent item, as it could not reasonably be deferred to the next scheduled meeting of Finance and Democracy on 7 October (see section 100B, subsection 4b Local Government Act 1972). It was considered urgent due to the urgency to award the contract to the preferred bidder in relation to the likely deadlines for submission of the Levelling Up bids.
2. To grant delegated authority to the Director of Development Services to award the contract for the St Annes Town Centre and Island Health Check and masterplan.

#### 4. Unfunded Revenue Budget Increase - Communications, Marketing & Public Relations Resource

Allan Oldfield introduced the report that set out the rationale for the provision of additional resources in the communications service to meet the demands of modern-day public sector requirements. He highlighted that communications had undergone significant change over the last few years which had been accelerated by the pandemic and the dominance of digital and social media that had transformed demand, expectation, and engagement. The range of skill sets, knowledge and experience required to deliver an effective and holistic communications service that accommodated the diverse functions delivered by the local authority was extensive.

The Chairman, Councillor Karen Buckley, congratulated and thanked Alex Scrivens, Performance and Improvement Manager, and his communications team on the work they had put in with the increased challenges and demands over the past eighteen months.

Councillor Clayton moved an amendment to add a third recommendation as follows:

*“That a policy/protocol is adopted in line with The Department for Communities and Local Government’s document:- ‘Code of recommended Practice on Local Government Authority Publicity’ and that all members of the Council and officers are made aware of its content.”*

Councillor Griffiths seconded the amendment. Following a request for a recorded vote, the vote on the amendment was taken:

Votes for the proposal (4) - Councillors Clayton, P Collins, Griffiths, and Nulty.

Votes against the proposal (8) – Councillors Buckley, Settle, Anthony, Gaunt, O’Rourke, Redcliffe, Singleton and Withers.

The amendment was LOST.

Mr Scrivens provided an undertaking that the Council’s current communications strategy was to be reviewed and an updated version will made available.

Following a discussion and questions, that were responded in full by Mr Scrivens and Mr Oldfield, it was unanimously RESOLVED:

1. That Council be requested to approve an unfunded revenue budget increase of £54,084 per annum (full year costs – with part year costs for the current year pro-rata depending upon the recruitment dates) to finance the two new corporate support posts of Marketing & Social Media Officer and Press & Media Officer;
  2. That Council be requested to approve an unfunded budget increase of £15,000 per annum from 2021-22 onwards for the provision of additional communication specialist services including photography, videography, social media market segmentation targeting.
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