

# Clerk's Report and additional information for items for the Finance and Governance Committee Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

- 1) AGAR – 3 of the 4 residents who had objections have withdrawn their objections. The one remaining objector has withdrawn some points but still kept in 3 objections which the Clerk has replied to the external auditor, ccing the resident, to give explanations and is awaiting a reply.
- 2) Emergency Community Fund policy will be brought to a later meeting.
- 3) Tender for Christmas Lights – The Clerk has met with Cllrs C Mulroney and P Barber. The tender will be written and brought to Full Council for agreement.
- 4) IT Hardware investigation – The tracing of the wiring etc has taken place and the new wiring will take place later in February.
- 5) Gas and Electricity contracts – These have been agreed and started.
- 6) Draft Budget – This was take to Full Council on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and agreed. The Clerk has sent the paperwork to Southend City Council.

## **Item 6 Financial Transactions**

The payment list has been circulated by the Finance Officer. Cllr P Barber checked the list on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. The Finance Officer has requested for another Councillor to come in and check the invoices before the meeting.

## **Item 7 Financial Review**

The reconciliations for December have been circulated. If the reconciliations for January are available for the meeting the Clerk will bring them. The budget comparison report has been circulated.

## **Item 8 Earmarked Reserves and Unallocated Reserves**

The Clerk has circulated the updated Earmarked Reserves report which also shows the CIL monies.

The Clerk asks the committee to discuss the report and agree for the financial year 2025/26.

## **Item 9 Fees for Hall Hire and External Facilities hire for 2025/26**

This item is withdrawn as the Clerk has been advised that an increase in fees was agreed in July 2024. These changes will now be implemented.

### **Item 10 Café and Bar Income**

The Finance Officer is awaiting the spreadsheet from the people who run the bar. This therefore may have to be deferred to Full Council.

### **Item 11 Grants**

The Clerk has circulated a grant application for the Council to consider. The Council needs to note that there are no accounts for this group or a constitution. The Clerk asks the Council to discuss and advise if they are in agreement with the grant request.

### **Item 12 Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England Consultation**

The Clerk included the link for the consultation in the email she sent on Wednesday with the agenda and papers. However for ease of reference the link is below:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england?utm\\_source=emailmarketing&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=news\\_bulletin\\_\\_18\\_december\\_2024&utm\\_content=2024-12-18&fbclid=IwY2xjawHfq8RleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHf4QFFkMoKLWFXwWru95c5xw8pw4ao8cCfJR Bij9AH0R0i0G7G27c8nflA\\_aem\\_YAez3us428va0NpVsAQdYg](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england/strengthening-the-standards-and-conduct-framework-for-local-authorities-in-england?utm_source=emailmarketing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=news_bulletin__18_december_2024&utm_content=2024-12-18&fbclid=IwY2xjawHfq8RleHRuA2FlbQlXMQABHf4QFFkMoKLWFXwWru95c5xw8pw4ao8cCfJR Bij9AH0R0i0G7G27c8nflA_aem_YAez3us428va0NpVsAQdYg)

### **Topic of this consultation**

This consultation seeks views on introducing a mandatory minimum code of conduct for local authorities in England, and measures to strengthen the standards and conduct regime in England to ensure consistency of approach amongst councils investigating serious breaches of their member codes of conduct, including the introduction of the power of suspension.

### **Scope of this consultation**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is consulting on introducing strengthened sanctions for local authority code of conduct breaches in England.

This includes all 'relevant authorities' as defined by Section 27(6) of the Localism Act 2011, which includes:

- a county council
- a unitary authority
- London borough councils
- a district council
- the Greater London Authority
- the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
- the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority or police authority
- the Council of the Isles of Scilly
- parish councils
- a fire and rescue authority in England constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies,
- a joint authority established by Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1985, an economic prosperity board established under section 88 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- a combined authority established under section 103 of that Act,
- a combined county authority established under section 9(1) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
- the Broads Authority
- a National Park authority in England established under section 63 of the Environment Act 1995

The consultation finishes on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Councillors can reply to this individually as well as the Council replying as a whole.

The Council are to discuss this consultation and agree on the answers they wish to make and how this will be undertaken.

### **Item 13 Policies**

The Clerk has distributed the Safeguarding policy and the paper written by Cllr C Willoughby for discussion and agreement on any changes.