

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH
COMMUNITY COUNCIL HELD ON 13 September 2024 at 6:00pm in the Council Meeting
Room at Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery.**

PRESENT

Councillors: Steve Bard (Chair), Bruno Góes Maciel, Mark Lewis, Josh Rawcliffe, Nick Simmons, Glyn Smith.

Officers: Steve Edwards (Clerk/RFO), Molly Jones (Deputy Clerk).

Via Video Link: Erika Davies (Deputy Clerk)

Apologies: Mike Whatley.

Absent: None.

31. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mike Whatley.

32. Declarations of interest or dispensations

None.

33. Minutes 19 July 2024

The Committee made an amendment to item 26 to change “unaudited” to “unqualified”. The Committee **RESOLVED** that, with this amendment, the minutes were a true and correct record.

34. Draft Mission Statement

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend the following mission statement to Full Council:

“Improving the Abertillery and Llanhilleth Community Council area to benefit the local residents’ lives, health and wellbeing.”

35. Financial Regulations

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend a number of amendments to the NALC Model Financial Regulations to Full Council. (Appendix A)

36. Ward Grants Application Form & Criteria

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend the following amendments for the Ward Grant Process to Full Council:

- Section 1, item 2: Change “Councillor” to “Ward Committee”
- Section 2, item 3: Change “£200 per Councillor” to “£200 per number of Councillors in that ward per year”
- Remove section 2, item 4.
- Section 2, item 5: Remove “the maximum Ward Grant will be £200”.
- Section 2, item 7: Change “Finance Committee” to “Ward Committee”.
- Remove items 8, 9, 10 and 11 from section 2.

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- Section 2, item 12: Change “must” to “should” and remove the second sentence.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend the following amendments for the Ward Grant Application Form to Full Council:

- Remove “Approx no. of beneficiaries”.
- Remove “company”.
- Add a section requesting bank details.
- Remove “and supporting documents” and add option to return the form to a local Councillor.

37. Payment Process

The Committee reviewed and noted the payment process document.

38. Objections to 2020-2021 accounts

The Clerk provided a verbal report about two responses from Audit Wales regarding objections to the Council’s 2020-2021 accounts. These reports state that the accounts are correct and no further actions are needed.

The Clerk also highlighted that the investigations by Audit Wales to respond to these objections will result in considerable costs for the Council. A full report of these costs will be provided to Full Council once it has been received from Audit Wales.

39. 2025-2026 Budget Timeline

The Committee outlined the budget-setting process for 2025-2026:

- October: Final Committee budget proposals to be set.
- October 29th: Finance Committee to meet to review these budget proposals.
- Mid-November: Finance Committee to invite Committee Chairs to a meeting to discuss proposals.
- End of November/start of December: Finance Committee to finalise budget recommendations for Full Council.
- January 15th 2025: Full Council to meet to agree the budget and precept for the 2025-2026 financial year.

40. Bank Reconciliations.

The September bank reconciliation checks will be completed by Cllrs Glyn Smith and Nick Simmons.

The October bank reconciliation checks will be completed by Cllrs Josh Rawcliffe and Mark Lewis.

The November bank reconciliation checks will be completed by Cllrs Steve Bard and Mike Whatley.

The December bank reconciliation checks will be completed by Cllrs Bruno Góes Maciel and Mark Lewis.

41. Date of next meeting

October 29th 2024 at 6pm.

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Minutes produced by Molly Jones, Deputy Clerk.

The meeting ended at 7:52pm.

Signed as correct record by the Chair.....

Date.....

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Appendix A

NALC Model Financial Regulations: Suggested amendments for Full Council to review.

Paragraph	What Decision	Recommendation
1.5	To keep "The Clerk has been appointed as RFO and these regulations apply accordingly"	Keep this in.
1.7	Decide on the amount that council shall authorise (default is £5,000)	Change to "Council/relevant Committee". Keep at £5000. New line of spending over £5000 needs to go back to Council/relevant committee.
2.2	Remove "with RFO"; Amend "approval by Council" to approval by Council following recommendations from the Finance Committee"	Remove "with RFO". Accept amendment.
2.3	Remove "with the RFO"	Remove "with RFO".
2.6	Amend so it reads "At least once in each month and at each financial year-end two Members of the Finance Committee shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all bank accounts produced by the RFO. The Members shall sign and date the reconciliations as evidence of this." This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to be noted by the Council and Finance Committee	Accept amendment.
3.3	Remove "Governance and Accountability"	Remove.
3.4	Remove "Governance and Accountability"	Remove.
3.7	Confirm that the Internal Auditor shall be appointed by Council	Confirmed: internal auditor should be appointed by Council.
4.2	1: Should review be done by Council, Finance Committee or HR? 2: Should be done in October so can be put in budget for next year. 3: Can remove "informing Committees" as there are no salary implications for them	Review by HR at least annually in November. Remove "inform Committees".
4.3	Month to be November; forecast 2 or three years?	No later than November. No forecasting.
4.4	Leave as is?	Leave as is.
4.5	Leave as is?	Take out "if any".
4.6	Will three-year forecasts be needed?	No forecasting.
4.7	Decide on three years; remove "council tax (England)"; Confirm end of January.	Determine budget via the Council's budget process. No forecasting. Remove "council tax England". Confirm end of January.
4.11	Remove "or relevant committee" replace with "or RFO if required to cover essential spending"	Remove "or relevant Committee" replace with "or RFO if required to cover essential spending."
5.6	Is £60,000 the right amount? We should always advertise open tender	Clerk shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers for all contracts. Open tender not to Council. Option 2.
5.8	Decide on amount	Remove 5.8 completely.
5.9	Decide on amounts	Remove 5.9 completely.

5.10	amend "Clerk" to "Officers"	Change "clerk" to "officers or committees". Small purchases (value of under £1,000).
5.15	Decide on all amounts	Change £500 to £1,000 for Clerk. Leave rest as is.
5.16	Leave as is?	Leave as is.
5.17	Leave as is?	Remove "due delegated committee...."
5.18	Decide on amount	Change to £1,000.
5.19	Decide on what is "major"	Change major to new.
5.20	Amend "An official order or letter"" to An Official order, email or letter"	Accept amendment.
5.21	Leave as is?	Leave as is.
6.1	Put in names of our banking and Investment accounts. Keep annual review	Add Unity Trust Bank and CCLA. Keep annual review.
6.2	Add on first line "Arrangements to be reviewed annually by the Finance Committee and any recommendations forwarded to Council	Accept addition.
6.6	Amend "may" to "shall"	Accept amendment.
6.7	Is this needed?	Remove 6.7 completely.
6.8	Finance Committee see the bank rec so not sure this is needed	Remove 6.8 completely.
6.9	Decide on amounts	Change £500 to £1,000. Delete "excluding VAT". Change £2,000 to £1,000 and delete "excluding VAT". Keep at £10,000. Remove "or finance committee."
6.9 Additional item	v. In the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting and legislation does not allow for virtual meetings, the Clerk will have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council where such a decision cannot be reasonably deferred or must be made in order to comply with commercial or statutory deadlines. This will be carried out where possible in consultation with the Chair and the Vice Chair. Any decision made under this delegation must be recorded in writing by the Clerk and reported to the next convened meeting of Full Council. The delegation authority ceases upon the first meeting of the Full Council after the emergency delegation has been enacted.	Accept addition.
6.10	Part covered by bank rec, payments are authorised by 2 of the 4 authorised signatories and only when minuted decision or contract terms are in place. May need to re-write all of this to fall in line with our processes.	Remove 6.10 completely.
7.1	Do we need to add at end "or any organisation they have an interest in unless payments cannot be made because there are not enough remaining signatories"	Change to four Councillors. Remove Clerk as an authorised signatory. Accept addition.
7.3	Do we need to add "or RFO" at the end who can disclose PIN	Remove "to anyone not authorised".
7.4	Amend "two" to "all"	Accept amendment.

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7.5	we can leave this as is, in practical terms any of the 3 officers can act as service administrators	Leave as is.
7.6	Leave as is?	Leave as is.
7.7	Remove whole line about printout, as we can always get hard copies if we need them and we should be saving paper	Remove line about printout.
7.8	Does the monthly bank rec cover this off?	Remove "appended to minutes."
7.9	Add in Printing Costs In the such as examples. Amend "the council" to the Finance Committee" or leave as council?; Do we need approval to set up.	Add printing costs. Change to finance committee.
7.10	Leave as is?	Leave as is.
7.11	Leave as is?	Leave as is.
7.12	"verified by three people, one officer and two of the authorised signatories"	Accept amendment.
7.13	Covered by our contract with Microshade, officers should review annually to ensure we have all the safeguards in place. Note of Compliance to be signed off by Clerk	Leave as is. Add note of compliance signed off by Clerk.
8.1	Amend "two members" to "two of the authorised signatories"; Delete one of the "in accordance"	Accept amendments.
8.4	Do we need this as we now only rarely issue cheques.	Remove 8.4 completely.
9.1	The card limit is £1,000 as agreed by Council	Change from £500 to £1,000.
9.3	Should we specify Deputy Clerks?	Remove 9.3 completely.
9.4	We should stay with the first option	First option.
10.1	We do not have petty cash, so whole of section 10 to reflect this	Accept recommendation. Will not retain cash float. Remove second option in A B and C.
11.6	Reports from BGCBC are quarterly, so this paragraph should reflect this.	Reports are received quarterly, reflect that BGCBC deals with it. Once a quarter reports viewed by HR. HR note to Finance that this has been checked.
Section 12	Leave as is?	Leave as is.
13.6	Use first option	Fix spelling/grammar. Use first option.
13.7	remove "significant"; Add a receipt will be issued	Remove "significant". Accept addition.
Section 14	Leave as is?	Leave as is.
Section 15	Leave as is? It may apply to storage unit	Leave as is.
Section 16 Additional item 16.5	Any write off of any asset shall In the first instance be confirmed by the RFO and then reviewed and agreed by the Finance Committee before removal from the Asset Register, The write off will be minuted in the minutes of that Committee.	Accept addition.
19.1	Remove "RFO"	Remove "RFO"
Section 19 Additional item 19.4	Only a meeting of the Council can permanently amend the Financial Regulations, this authority cannot be delegated to a Committee or Officers.	Accept addition.