

## **RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL**

### **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes: 15 September 2015: Start Time 7.30pm.

**PRESENT:**

Cllr L Jones. (Chair), Cllr H Howell, Cllr L Wilkes, Cllr R Levell, Cllr D Hughes.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Ms K Houlihan, Town Clerk (Minutes)

Miss J Coduri, Assistant to the Clerk

**269.15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

None received.

**270.15 NOTIFICATION OF REQUESTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE MEETING IN COMPLIANCE WITH ADOPTED PROTOCOL.**

None received.

**271.15 NOTIFICATION OF MEMBERS QUESTIONS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS.**

None received

**272.15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

None Received.

**273.15 MINUTES.**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 21 July 2015 were examined for accuracy.

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 21 July 2015 be approved.**

**274.15 INTERNAL AUDIT**

Members reviewed the report of the clerk (Appendix 1) and careful consideration was given to the recommendations therein.

**RESOLVED to recommend to the Full Council that:**

- a) the policy on Financial (Internal) Control be adopted subject to the following amendments:

**The additional internal control checks should be made:**

- That wages and salaries are correctly paid
- That Tax, National Insurance and Pensions are correctly accounted for.
- That all cash received has been properly accounted for and promptly banked.

**A report on any anomalies found in any of the Internal Control checks should be reported to the Policy and Resources committee. (Not Finance committee)**

**And that the Internal Controller should remain a cheque signatory but would only sign cheques in extremis.**

- b) That the Council, has carried out a review of the effectiveness of the internal audit and that the council is satisfied with the effectiveness of audit.**
- c) That the Council having reviewed the effectiveness of audit has identified that cash handling and payment of salaries are areas for development in future audits.**

#### **275.15 BUDGET 2016/17**

Members reviewed the budget report and it was...

**RESOLVED that the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee would prepare a draft budget with the Clerk for presentation to the next meeting of the P & R committee.**

#### **276.15 RAUNDS MIDDLE CO-OP**

Members noted the progress to date with the Raunds Middle Co-op project.

Discussion was held around the future governance structure, if the venture proceeds and whether it would be run on a commercial or not for profit basis.

It was agreed that this could be reviewed at a future date and that the cost of conversion needed to be identified.

It was then ...

**RESOLVED that the clerk would obtain guide prices from 2 possible retail fitters.**

#### **277.15 STANDING ORDERS**

The committee reviewed the amended Standing Orders and it was...

**RESOLVED that the Committee recommend to the Full Council that the Standing Orders be adopted as tabled subject to the following amendments:**

- a) Paragraph 5.6 be removed**
- b) Paragraph 7.1 should read:**

***“each committee shall consist of a minimum of five members and a maximum of seven members of the council including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor who shall sit as ex-officio members of the committee...”***

In addition it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Full Council that:

- a) the Annual Town Assembly should take place in April.
- b) that the Mayors handbook should be reviewed at the next Policy & Resources committee meeting.

**278.15 THE HALL**

The committee considered the report of the clerk (Appendix 2) and it was...

**RESOLVED** to recommend to the Full Council that:

- a) The clerk investigate the use of the council chamber as a wedding venue;
- b) The clerk seeks to promote the use of the chamber for private hire;
- c) The council approve the necessary expenditure for The Hall (Council Chamber) to become licensed as a wedding venue;
- d) The underspend on the refurbishment budget is used to redecorate other public areas within the building.

**279.15 TO CONSIDER THE COUNCILS MEDIUM TERM STRATEGY (BUSINESS PLAN)**

Members reviewed the document in detail and were pleased to note the progress made to date.

A number of amendments were made.

**RESOLVED** that the Chair of the committee would meet with the Clerk to discuss the plan further and an updated version of the plan would be presented to a future meeting of the P&R committee.

**280.15 COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

The committee reviewed the strategy and made amendments to the draft.

It was noted that the next stage was to complete a timeline for all the actions in the plan.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the clerk would present an updated version of the strategy to the next meeting of the P&R committee.
- b) To recommend to the Full Council that the town council should publish draft minutes on its website and that the council would “live tweet” information from its meetings.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 9.28pm

Approved: ..... (Town Mayor)

Meeting date: ..... 13 October 2015.....  
(Council)

Approved: ..... (Chairman)

Meeting date: ..... 20 October 2015..... (Committee)

## Appendix 1:

### Internal Audit

<p>Summary: A report to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the effectiveness of the internal audit, risk management and internal controls;</li> <li>• Review the policy on Financial (Internal) Control;</li> </ul>	
<p>Attachments: Appendix 1 – Policy for Financial (Internal) Control Appendix 2 – Terms of reference for Internal Audit – first approved March 2011 and reviewed annually. Appendix 3 -- Review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit.</p>	
<b>1.0</b>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Internal auditing is an independent, objective <a href="#">assurance</a> designed to add value and improve a Council's operations.</p> <p>The aim of internal auditing is to act as a catalyst for improving an organisation's governance, risk management and management controls by providing insight and recommendations based on an assessment of an organisation's transactions, data and business <a href="#">processes</a>.</p> <p>The scope of internal auditing is broad and may involve topics such as governance, risk management, management controls over the efficiency and effectiveness of operations (including safeguarding of assets), the reliability of financial and management reporting, and <a href="#">compliance</a> with laws and regulations.</p> <p>Internal auditing may also involve conducting proactive investigations into fraud to identify control breakdowns and establish financial loss.</p> <p>The Council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit failure to do this may lead to a qualified audit opinion.</p>
<b>2.0</b>	<p><b>The role of Councillors</b></p> <p>Councillors have oversight of the whole process of internal audit, risk management and internal control. The policy on Financial Control sets this out in more detail.</p> <p>It is through this oversight, Members gain assurance that the Council is being run efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>In considering the reports of both internal and external auditors, as they are produced during the year, Councillors can determine any actions needed to improve the Council's performance.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<p><b>Policy on Financial (Internal) Control</b></p> <p>The Council adopted a policy on Financial Controls in 2011. A revised version is shown in Appendix 1 (Appendix 1).</p> <p>In line with Financial Regulations the Council has appointed an Internal Controls Councillor (ICC) (the Chair of Finance); who, conducts quarterly checks in line with the Council's Policy and Financial regulations.</p> <p>Having considered the policy and subject to any amendments, the Council should <b>resolve</b> to adopt.</p>

<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Internal Audit Service and its Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>The internal audit service is currently provided by NCalc (the Northamptonshire Association of local Councils), which provides the Council with an economical and efficient service meeting the needs of the Council.</p> <p>The terms of reference for internal audit are set out in Appendix 2 and are included for the completeness of the report but, do not fall due for review this year.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<p><b>Effectiveness of internal audit</b></p> <p>The council should review the effectiveness of internal audit and Appendix 3 sets out how the internal audit is conducted in an independent manner and establishes the rights of the auditor to access all documents etc. The report reviews how the required standards are achieved and effectiveness maintained.</p> <p>Council should review the report and, if satisfied, <b>resolve</b> to accept the review.</p>
<b>6.0</b>	<p><b>Risk Management</b></p> <p>A comprehensive review of risks will be carried out by the Policy and Resources committee. However, risk management remains an essential part of the Council's everyday business.</p> <p>Effective internal control and internal audit are fundamental to the process of managing risk within the authority.</p> <p>The proposals within this report will strengthen governance and support good risk management.</p>
<b>7.0</b>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council re-adopts its policy on Financial Control (Appendix 1);</li> <li>2. that the Council, having reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit, confirms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) it is satisfied with the audit arrangements;</li> <li>b) it's satisfaction at the effectiveness of the service.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

## Appendix 2:

### The Hall

**Summary:** A report on increasing revenues at the Hall, Thorpe Street.

**Attachments:** None:

<b>1.0</b>	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>In July 2015 the council considered the refurbishment of the council chamber.</p> <p>The Council resolved:</p> <p><b>171.15 CHAMBER RE-DECORATION</b></p> <p>Members received the report from the clerk on the re-decorating of the Council Chamber.</p> <p>In consideration of the report, members agreed a reasonable budget to work within that would include the reconfiguration of the lighting so that the existing ceiling rose could be used. It was expected that the actual figure would be substantially less however the figure agreed would need to allow for any possible contingencies which could occur.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>To set a budget of up to £15,000 for the refurbishment work;</b></li> <li>b) <b>The work should take place during the August recess;</b></li> <li>c) <b>It be delegated to the clerk, in liaison with the working party to agree the materials and lighting to be used.</b></li> </ol> <p>The work took place during August and September. The photo below shows the Chamber prior to the works.</p>
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Chamber July 2015 prior to refurbishment works

2.0

**Spend to date**

Redecoration: Materials and Labour	£5449
Lighting (Chandeliers)	£2147
Electrical Works	£600
Fixtures and fittings	£1500 (p)
<b>Total</b>	<b>£9596.00</b>

(p) planned

3.0

**Future use of the room**

As the work has been completed to a very high standard, (*as will be seen at the meeting!*) it would be good management for the council to maximise use of this asset and generate a return on the council's investment.

Possible future uses of the room include private hire for meetings and events, and weddings. A license would be required for the council to become an approved wedding venue at a cost of £1,400 (approx.) for 3 years. However this has the potential to generate significant income to the council.

If the room were to be used a wedding venue it would be necessary to redecorate some of the other public areas in the building.

4.0

**Recommendations**

The recommendations are that the committee resolves to recommend to the Full Council that:

- 1) The clerk investigate the use of the council chamber as a wedding venue.
- 2) That the clerk seeks to promote the use of the chamber for private hire.
- 3) That the council approve the necessary expenditure for The Hall (Council Chamber) to become licensed as a wedding venue.
- 4) That the underspend on the refurbishment budget is used to redecorate other public areas within the building