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6 October 2016

To: All Members of the Finance and Administration Committee – Councillors S Abbott, P Anstey, J Fraser, Mrs R Hopkinson, M Jackson, D Jarman, D Jones, P Pearson, M Simpkins, 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 12 October 2016 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 10 August 2016 - *for information only.*
5. Review of Grants Policy (*Minute F&A 06/16 and others*) – At the Committee meeting on 29 June, Councillor Jarman volunteered to look through past grant awards to help establish the nature of any proposed changes and make proposals. This work has been carried out and observations include: the vast bulk of requests are one-offs, not regular; only three organisations apply almost every year; and the amount of money sought is pretty close to the money awarded in each year. Emphasis has been placed on the general grants rather than those already covered by Service Level Agreements. Suggestions have been made on changing the way records are collected in order to provide data on how that budget is used and to enable easier comparison between years. This may lead to methods of identifying how effective the grant awards have been,

although the methodology is still under consideration. Further information will be available at the meeting – *for review*.

6. Grant Applications (Fourth Round) – The grants scheme for 2016/17 is being publicised and two 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 2016/17 are as follows: Grants General (budget heading 102/1260) £1,257; Methuen Hall (budget heading 102/1261) £11,000; Arts Centre (budget heading 102/1265) £2,000; Community/Village Halls (budget heading 102/1271) £1,000; Tourism/CADT (budget heading 102/1272) £2,500. There is also an earmarked Grant Reserve Fund (budget heading EMR 347) £9,800.

Details of the grant applications are as follows:

<b>Awarded 2015/16</b>	<b>Requested 2016/17</b>	<b>Applicant &amp; Purpose</b>
£346	£354	Revitalise – Towards providing a one-week respite break for a disabled person and their carer from Corsham at a UK centre.
£50	£100	Neston 60 Plus Club – Towards the Club's Christmas party.

- *for consideration and decision*.

7. Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts (including the Town Hall) – To consider the financial report – *for review*.
8. Internal Audit Report 2016/17 (First Interim) - A copy of the report from the first interim visit is attached, along with the draft response to the two recommendations.

*Recommendation*

That the draft response to the Internal Audit Report 2016/17 (First Interim) be endorsed.

9. Appointment of Internal Auditors 2017/18 – Formal note of an appointment of internal auditors is required. Auditing Solutions Ltd has provided a satisfactory service since being appointed over 14 years ago.

*Recommendation*

That Auditing Solutions Ltd be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditors for 2017/18.

10. The 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement, Technical Consultation Paper (DCLG) (MIS no. 356) (see attached or <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-finance-settlement-2017-to-2018-technical-consultation>) – As mentioned in Members' Information Sheet no. 356, the Government is consulting on the possibility of introducing Council Tax Referendum Principles from 2017/18. The proposals are summarised as follows:

- i) The referendum threshold for council tax increases is proposed at 2 per cent for all local authorities, as in 2016/17. However, shire districts will be allowed increases of up to and including £5, or up to 2 per cent, whichever is higher.
- ii) There will also continue to be an additional adult social care precept of 2 per cent for authorities with responsibility for social care services.
- iii) For the first time, referendum principles will apply to town and parish councils for which the Band D charge is higher than £75.46 and the total precept is over £500,000.
- iv) However, those town and parish councils where a service had been transferred from a local authority would not be subject to the referendum principle, providing certain conditions are satisfied.
- v) The government is also prepared to consider extending the referendum principles to all town and parish councils.

The Town Council would be affected by the above principles as it has a Band D equivalent in excess of £75.46 and a precept of over £500,000 per year.

There is a great deal of concern from local councils, NALC, SLCC and Wiltshire Council, whose plans for devolved services would be restricted. Details of the concerns raised by these organisations will be available at the meeting.

The consultation document includes 11 questions but the relevant ones are questions 4 to 7.

Concerns by the Chief Executive include: the impact on plans for asset transfer and service delegation (there is no information about how point iv) above would be addressed); the effect of the Community Governance Review will reduce the number of Band D equivalent properties, thereby increasing the rate; the unnecessary restriction the regulations would place on local decision-making; the cost of a referendum, and the ability to raise necessary funds for large capital projects, such as the new cemetery.

It is recommended that the Town Council responds to the consultation, supporting the objections raised by the Chief Executive and the various bodies in the local council sector – *instructions requested*.

- 11. Equality and Diversity Policy – The Town Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy has been updated (*see attached*). The update is based on the model provided by Peninsula, the Town Council’s HR Advisors – *for approval*.
- 12. Strategic Plan Monitoring and Evaluation (*Minute F&A 17/16 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*.
- 13. Annual Insurance Review (*Minute F&A 25/15*) – The Chief Executive has completed the Annual Insurance Review and no issues or concerns have been identified. The insurance cover was comprehensively reviewed and re-tendered earlier in the year resulting in significant savings on the premium as well as additional cover – *for information/comment*.