



**Minutes of the Oversight Committee meeting held on Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at 13:00  
at The Bungalow, 8A North Street, Credition, EX17 2BT**

**Present:** Cllrs Steve Huxtable, Liz Brookes-Hocking, Guy Cochran, Giles Fawssett and Joyce Harris

**Absent:** Cllrs Rachel Backhouse, Jim Cairney and Natalia Letch

**Minute Taker:** Rachel Avery, Town Clerk

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## MINUTES

### 135 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Cllr Huxtable opened the meeting at 13.00 and noted that there were no new attendees, so member introductions were skipped.

### 136 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public in attendance.

### 137 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

### 138 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS

#### 138.1 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL INTEREST AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPI'S) IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 138.2 TO CONSIDER ANY DISPENSATION REQUESTS (REQUESTS SHOULD BE MADE TO THE TOWN CLERK PRIOR TO THE MEETING)

There were no dispensation requests.

### 139 CLIMATE EMERGENCY

It was **noted** that decisions will be made with the climate emergency at the forefront of decision and policy making.

### 140 ORDER OF BUSINESS

There were no changes to the order of business.

**141 CHAIR'S AND CLERK'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements

**142 OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Decision:** The minutes from the Oversight Committee meeting held on Tuesday, 12 November 2024, were approved as a correct record. (Proposed by Cllr Harris)

**143 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The internal audit report was presented and reviewed. Members discussed the comments made by the new auditor, noting that while there were many, most were minor and easily addressed. The discussion highlighted the need to amend certain processes, including:

- certification of accounts for payment by the Town Clerk
- the handling of cash, particularly in relation to the youth club and allotments. On this matter, there was a consensus on the need to explore the acquisition of a card machine to reduce cash handling.

**Decision:** The internal audit report was accepted, and the recommendations were noted for implementation. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

**Task:** Amend processes for the certification of accounts for payment by the Town Clerk and handling of cash, particularly in relation to the youth club and allotments.

**Task:** Explore the acquisition of a card machine to reduce cash handling.

**144 ENABLING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

The Town Clerk summarised the responses received from individual members regarding the consultation. Out of eight responses, the majority supported the idea of granting local authorities the power to enable remote attendance without limitations. The responses indicated strong support for modernising measures, with most members agreeing that it would increase participation and willingness to stand for election. There was some division on the issue of proxy voting, with responses split between support and opposition.

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to submit a response to the HM Government consultation, reflecting the majority views and noting the divided opinion on proxy voting. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

**145 BUDGET 2025/26**

The initial draft budget for 2025/26 was reviewed. Discussions focused on the proposed precept increase, which was calculated to be just under 5%. Members debated the allocation of funds, particularly for project initiation, economic development, and local authority services. There was a consensus on the need to justify any increases and ensure that the budget remained balanced and measured. The possibility of reallocating

funds from general reserves was also discussed. It was agreed that the budget presented was fair and provided sufficient cushions for unforeseen circumstances.

**Decision:** The draft budget for 2025/26 was accepted for further review and final approval in January.

**146 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**Decision:** It was **noted** that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 14 January 2025.

**147 PART II**

**Decision:** It was **resolved** to approve the exclusion of the public and press were from the meeting under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. (Proposed by Cllr Huxtable)

**148 COUNCIL OFFICES**

The Town Clerk provided an update on the council offices.

**148.1 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE DOCUMENTATION**

The documentation was received and noted.

**148.2 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE**

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update.

**149 REPORTS PACK**

Signed .....

Dated.....