

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE** HELD AT NEWTON'S PLACE, WOLBOROUGH STREET, NEWTON ABBOT ON **WEDNESDAY 25th JUNE 2025** AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors D Corney-Walker (Chairperson) Presiding
B Bailey (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillors P Bullivant A Gibbs
L Cooke M Joyce
C Davieson C Parker
A Hall M Ryan

Officers in Attendance: Phil Rowe – Town Clerk
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk and RFO
Linda McGuirk – Principal Administrator
Nigel Canham – Communications Advisor

By invitation: Mike Hocking, Freeman of Newton Abbot

Also, present: 2x Representatives of Newton Abbot Youth Football Club
2 x Representatives of The Seed Library
1 x Representative of Green Futures Newton Abbot
2 x Representative of Home-Start Teignbridge

105. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE 2025/26

Nominations were received for the election of the Chairperson of the Finance & Audit Committee for the year 2025/2026.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor David Corney-Walker be elected Chairperson of the Finance & Audit Committee for the year 2025/2026.

106. APOLOGIES

A valid reason for absence was received from Councillor P Parker.

107. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE 2025/26

Nominations were received for the appointment of the Vice Chairperson of the Finance & Audit Committee for the year 2025/2026.

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED that Councillor Brian Bailey be appointed Vice Chairperson of the Finance & Audit Committee for the year 2025/2026.

Chairperson initials.....

108. **INTERESTS**

None.

109. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee held on 19th February 2025 were received and signed as a correct record.

110. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation, the Chairperson advised that agenda item 9, Grant Applications, would be brought forward and considered as agenda item 7.

111. **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Chairperson welcomed the representatives from each organisation to the meeting and invited them to give a short presentation to members. Following the presentations, the Committee was requested to consider the following grant applications:

- Home-Start Teignbridge
- Newton Town Youth Football Club
- Green Futures Newton Abbot
- The Seed Library
- Space Youth Services
- The Cwtch Hub CIC

Accordingly, it was:

RESOLVED

- a) That the Town Council hereby grants £996 to Home-Start Teignbridge
- b) That the Town Council hereby grants £2,000 to Newton Town Youth Football Club
- c) That the Town Council hereby grants £850 to Green Futures Newton Abbot
- d) That the Town Council hereby grants £300 to The Seed Library
- e) That the Town Council hereby grants £2,000 to Space Youth Services
- f) That the application received from The Cwtch Hub CIC be deferred, and the applicant be invited to submit a more detailed application for consideration during the next round of grant applications in October. Members further suggested that the applicant be invited to give a short presentation to the Committee in support of the revised application.

Councillor C Parker abstained from voting on the Cwtch Hub CIC application.

112. **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee gave due consideration to the Terms of Reference for the Finance & Audit Committee, as circulated prior to the meeting.

Accordingly, it was:

Chairperson initials.....

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Finance & Audit Committee be hereby, approved and adopted

113. **POLICIES**

The Town Clerk delivered a training session to ensure Members had a clear understanding of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), including its purpose, structure, and the Council's responsibilities regarding its completion and approval. The presentation, displayed on the large screen, also clarified the treatment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income, noting that such income received by a planning authority in the UK is generally regarded as capital income rather than revenue. Members were invited to ask questions following the presentation.

During discussion, Councillor P Bullivant referenced the Local Government Act 2015 guidance, noting that it defines the role of the AGAR and the external auditor. He stated that the role of the auditor is dependent on the size of the authority and whether any material issue exists that could impact the financial standing of the Council. Councillor Bullivant queried whether the auditor was aware of the ongoing issue regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and whether it should be regarded as a matter of material consideration. He expressed concern that seeking clarification on this matter had been interpreted as a personal attack on the Council, which was not his intention.

The Town Clerk responded, confirming that the internal auditor has access to all relevant documentation and correspondence, and has reviewed the matter. The auditor had confirmed that they do not consider the CIL issue to be material in relation to the AGAR for 2024/25. There is no financial threat to the Council. Should the District Council seek repayment of unspent CIL funds then it has the option to recoup the amount from future CIL allocations. The Clerk further confirmed that the CIL matter does not constitute a material consideration in the context of the AGAR.

Councillor Bullivant stated that he did not withdraw his question to the auditor, as he believed it to be a reasonable and appropriate query. In his opinion, the current approach conflicted with LGA guidance.

Members expressed their thanks to the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and the Clerk for their work.

The Chairperson introduced the policy documents, as previously circulated:

- Statement of Internal Control
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- Risk Management & Business Continuity Plan

Following a review of the policy documents among Members, it was:

RESOLVED that the policies in relation to the:

- a) Statement of Internal Control
- b) Anti-Fraud and Corruption
- c) Risk Management & Business Continuity Plan

Chairperson initials.....

be hereby, approved and adopted.

114. **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

a) INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS

The Committee received the Income and Expenditure Statements for April and May 2025, as previously circulated. The Chairperson invited questions from Members who sought clarification on a few items in relation to expenditure during the period.

Members discussed the issue of incorrectly reported VAT within the financial reports. It was noted that this is a known limitation of the current accounting software. The Clerk advised that the Council is exploring the transition to a more appropriate and reliable accounting package. The timescale for implementation will be dependent on the availability of staff time to facilitate the transfer of accounts and ensure a smooth transition.

Arising from discussion, it was:

RESOLVED that the statement of income and expenditure for April and May 2025, as submitted to the Committee, be hereby approved and signed by the Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee.

Chairperson initials.....

NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT

30th APRIL 2025

Opening Balance	£ 433,679.25
VAT reclaim QTR 4 24/25	£ 35,172.93
Precept 1 st Tranche 25/26	£ 849,365.50
Misc. Income	£ 39,976.23
Total Income	£1,358,193.91
LESS:	
Expenditure	£ 173,707.40
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 173,707.40

BALANCE as of 30th APRIL 2025 **£1,184,486.51**
Business Call & Current Account:

Balances as of 30th APRIL 2025

Current Account	£ 101.00
Business Call Account	£ 1,184,385.51
Petty Cash Account	£ 200.00
Total Cash in hand at bank	£1,184,506.51

Total: £1,184,506.51

Balance of CCLA fund at 30th April 2025

£447,198.00

Chairperson initials.....

NEWTON ABBOT TOWN COUNCIL

INTERNAL AUDIT

31ST MAY 2025

Opening Balance	£1,184,486.51
Misc. Income	£ 12,789.45
Total Income	£1,197,275.96
LESS:	
Expenditure	£ 142,639.96
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£1,054,636.00
BALANCE as of 31ST MAY 2025 Business Call & Current Account:	£1,054,636.00

Balances as of 31st May 2025

Current Account	£ 161.00
Business Call Account	£ 1,054,474.00
Petty Cash Account	£ 200.00
Total Cash in hand at bank	£1,054,836.00

Total: £1,054,836.00

Balance of CCLA fund at 31st May 2025

£447,198.00

b) FINANCIAL BUDGET COMPARISON

The Chairperson referred to the Financial Budget Comparison summary and report which detailed Income and Expenditure for the Finance and Audit Committee for the period 1st April 2025 to 31st May 2025 (previously circulated). The Chairperson noted that there had been no

Chairperson initials.....

questions in advance but invited questions from Councillors. Following a brief discussion among Members, accordingly, it was

RESOLVED that the Financial Budget Comparison Summary for the Finance and Audit Committee for the period 1st April 2025 to 31st May 2025, be hereby approved and signed by the Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee.

115. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

116. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be Wednesday 29th October 2025.

Meeting closed at 20:40 hours

Chairperson.....Date.....

Chairperson initials.....