



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

FRM(21)M05

FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of Melton Parish Council Finance, Employment and Risk Management (FERM) Committee held on Wednesday 8 December 2021, commencing at 19:00 at 17 Riduna Park, Station Road, Melton IP12 1QT.

Present:

Cllr Mrs B Abbott
Cllr Mr N Brown
Cllr Mrs C Gradwell (in the Chair)
Cllr Mr M Packard
Cllr Mr A Porter
Cllr Mr C Taylor

Absent:

Cllr Mr B Banks

In Attendance:

Mr W J Grosvenor *Clerk and Executive Officer to Melton Parish Council*
Mrs P Alder *Assistant Clerk and Management Officer to Melton Parish Council*
The Council's Footpaths Advocate
1 member of the public

Part One – Open to the Public

Item No	Item to be discussed
21.52	To receive apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Banks.
21.53	Declarations of Interest
21.53.01	To receive Amendments to the Register There were none.
21.53.02	To receive Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda There were none.

21.56.04

VAT issues relating to the pavilion project

(Paper FRM(21)56.04)

This paper set out the issues relating to the requirements for the recovery of VAT in relation to the pavilion build project, including advice received from a VAT consultant. The right to reclaim VAT will depend on the uses of the new building. Where the uses are neither non-business or taxable, the Council will be able to recover the VAT. But where the VAT costs are attributable to a VAT exempt activity, the recovery will be subject to the Council's partial exemption position and so might not be recoverable. If for example the pavilion is solely used for Council activities and the communal space never let to third parties then it would be fully a non-business activity and VAT can be recovered in full. However where there are lettings of one sort or another the position becomes complicated and there is the risk that VAT on the build will not be recoverable in full. In order to ensure there is no risk to recovery of VAT in full on the pavilion build project, it is recommended that the Council exercise the option to tax the building. Following discussion **it was RESOLVED** to exercise the option to tax in respect of the new pavilion building.

Proposed by: Cllr Brown

Seconded by: Cllr Porter

21.56.05

New Finance software system

(Paper FRM(21)56.05)

The Assistant Clerk took Members through her report which recommends migration from *Alpha* to *Scribe* for reasons of improved functionality. Moving from *Alpha* to *Omega* within the RBS suite of products would not give any tangible benefits. Cllr Banks has already looked at the *Scribe* offering and considers that it has better functionality and future prospects than *Alpha*. Following discussion **it was RESOLVED**:

- To agree in principle to move to *Scribe*
- That the new Clerk will develop a project plan, in conjunction with advice from *Scribe*, that is workable, and bring back to Members with delegated decision-making powers via email for a decision on strategy and timing.

Proposed by: Cllr Taylor

Seconded by: Cllr Brown

21.57

To consider Pavilion project – update and tendering issues

Below is a link to the up to date information on the Council's website:

<https://melton-suffolk-pc.gov.uk/recreation/pavilion-project/>

(Paper FRM(21)57)

The report sought to resolve issues in relation to the draft specifications, in order that the tender documents can be issued to the contractors on the tender list to price the new build. The Clerk took Members through the correspondence with the architect outlined in the report. The latest versions of the specifications are on the Council's website (see link above). The outstanding issues related to (1) provision of a warranty and (2) the inclusion of significant provisional sums in the specifications. Provisional sums are used where it is desired to enter into a contract to enable the project to commence notwithstanding that the design of parts of the project is not yet finalised. The final amount payable by the client will be adjusted to reflect the actual cost of the provisional sum work. There are usually two aspects to the adjustment, the actual cost and the percentage allowed for overheads and profit. A common problem is where a contractor claims that item X falls within the provisional sum (and is therefore open to adjustment) whereas the client thinks it should have been included within the fixed price element. Therefore it is important to describe the provisional sum work as precisely as possible, and also as to whether overheads and profit on provisional sums will be treated as being included in the provisional sum allowances, or whether to be included in the main contractor's fixed price.

The Clerk has discussed with the architect as to whether at least some of these costs could be firmed up before tendering. The architect's view is that the detailed design aspects can best be addressed when the tenders are back and the chosen contractor appointed. At that point the Council as client either directly or by delegation will need to choose everything down to flooring, taps etc. Alternatively the architect could now, for example, seek a design of the electrics, kitchen fittings, plumbing etc. but as the Council has not yet specified these items it would both add significantly to a delay with the project and also to the architect's professional fees. One of the companies on the tender list has told the architect that the provisional allowances are realistic. The architect was invited to attend the meeting of FERM Committee but had a prior engagement. He was otherwise happy to attend a face to face meeting at a mutually convenient time.

Following discussion **it was AGREED** that:

- The architect will be asked to obtain prices for the purchase of a warranty
- The architect will be asked to make it clear in the specifications that the provisional sums should be regarded as cost ceilings
- Subject to those points the tender documents can be issued to the list of contractors already agreed by Full Council subject to instructing the architect to describe the provisional sum work more precisely, and also to make it clear as to whether overheads and profit on provisional sums will be treated as being included in the provisional sum allowances, or whether to be included in the main contractor's fixed price.
- (Provisionally) a special Full Council meeting in February should be convened to both select the winning tenderer and set up the arrangements for choosing fixtures and fittings for the new building.

21.58
21.58.01

To review risk management issues

Risk Register

(Paper FRM(21)58.01)

Members of FERM Committee reviewed the Risk Register updated for December 2021. No changes to ratings were proposed at this time and the report was **NOTED**.

21.59
21.59.01

To consider employment matters

Staffing report

The Assistant Clerk reported discussions with the Council's Maintenance Officer over workload issues. There is a regular dialogue on all aspects of the work that the Maintenance Officer undertakes, and training and health and safety needs identified. One issue that needs to be kept in view is in relation to transport requirements. Members wanted to emphasise that the Maintenance Officer is a key member of staff and his contribution is highly valued. That appreciation needs to be passed on to him.

21.60

To consider draft Health and Safety Policy

(Paper FRM(21)60)

Whilst Melton Parish Council has fewer than five employees and therefore does not have to have a Health and Safety Policy as a legal requirement, having such a policy statement affirms the Council's commitment to the prevention of harm and the promotion of safe working practices. The draft statement included the following sections:

- The Statement of Intent (the actual policy statement)
- Responsibilities and arrangements for Health and Safety within the Council
- The arrangements for Health and Safety: how risks are managed.

In discussion it was highlighted that under the paragraph on Display Screen Equipment there needs to be as well a regular assessment of workstations in the Regulations, and that will be added. Subject to that amendment, **it was RESOLVED** to adopt and publish the statement as a Council policy.

Proposed by: Cllr Brown

Seconded by: Cllr Taylor

21.61 **Prioritising County Council Services**

www.suffolk.gov.uk/.../your-thoughts-on-council-tax-and-our-services-for-2022-23

The Clerk reported on the public consultation relating to thoughts on prioritising future County Council Services which runs until 20 December 2021. Whilst acknowledging that around 75% of Council spending is on Adult care and Children's services, Councillors felt that if possible there should be a little more investment in highways drain clearing.

21.62 **To consider governance matters**

21.62.01 Report of decisions made by Clerk / Assistant Clerk under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014
(Paper MPC(21)62.01)

It was RESOLVED to ratify the decisions made by the Clerk / Assistant Clerk in respect of:

1. Payment of £1,735.00 + VAT to UK Power Networks for the disconnection of the pavilion electricity supply and reinstallation in a kiosk.
2. Payment of £295.00 and £200.00 to THS Consulting for the Building Regulations Compliance Certificate and EPC for the new build pavilion.

Proposed by: Cllr Taylor

Seconded by: Cllr Brown

21.63 **Finance Committee Chair's urgent business**

There was none.

21.64 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 9 February 2022, commencing at 19:00 at 17 Riduna Park, Station Road, Melton IP12 1QT. There being no further business for the Open part of the Agenda, and following consideration of the Confidential Items, the meeting closed at 21:00.

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