

# FINANCE AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE AGENDA

For a Meeting to be held at 7.30p.m on  
Tuesday 9th January 2024

At Champions Manor Hall Community Centre

Membership:

Councillor D Thompson (Chairman)

Councillor M O'Brien (Vice Chairman)

Councillor A Shearring  
Councillor Perham Lake  
Councillor R Crosbie

Councillor A Humphrey  
Councillor L Kelly  
Councillor G Piesse

Councillor B Massey  
Councillor D Eley  
Councillor Naslund

*Local Residents are welcome to attend this meeting. At the meeting, your elected Councillors will take decisions affecting YOU, the Community and the Town. The public may participate for up to 15 minutes for this purpose. If you have any queries, please telephone the Town Clerk on 01245 321817. Please join us.*



**Karen Atkins**  
South Woodham Ferrers Town Clerk  
03rd January 2024

**1. Apologies for absence**

To RECEIVE and ACCEPT any apologies for absence.

**2. Dispensation considerations**

To consider any dispensations, as required. Standing Order 12. Dispensation requests shall be in writing and submitted to the Town Clerk as soon as possible before the meeting, or failing that, at the start of the meeting for which the dispensation is required.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

Any Member declaring an interest is asked to state whether this is a pecuniary, registerable or non-registerable interest. Clarification, if required, can be sought prior to the meeting with the Chairman or the Town Clerk.

**4. Confirmation of Minutes**

To APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 05<sup>th</sup> December 2023 as a true record of the meeting.

**5. Public Questions**

In accordance with Standing Order 3.e to allow up to 15 minutes for members of the public to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item covered by the Committees Terms of Reference. At the close of this item members of the public will no longer be permitted to address the Committee; Members with pecuniary interests will also not be permitted to speak, address the Committee on those interests and must leave the meeting when the item in relation to their interest is being discussed.

**6. Financial Matters**

**a** to receive the budgetary positions for this Committee and Champions Manor Hall as of 31st December 2023.

**b** to receive and note the Council's bank balances as of 31st of December 2023

- Current Account £431,495.75
- Reserve Account £290,435.05

**c** to note financial transactions for December 2023 will be circulated under separate cover prior to the meeting when the December accounts have been completed.

**7. Items to Note**

The internal interim Audit 2023-24 report attached to agenda. This will be considered by Council on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**8. Financial Regulations**

Committee to consider setting up a working group to review the Financial Regulations for the Finance and Projects meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Recommendation and approval by Council will be on the 19th of March 2024.

**9. Business Savings account**

Committee to discuss and consider opening a new business savings account/s and transfer of proposed funds. Council to be aware of the FSCS Financial Services Compensation Scheme which is capped at £85,000.00. Report attached to agenda.

**10. Solar Panel project Champions Manor Hall**

Committee to discuss the involvement of professional services to review all the tenders received for consideration and approval by the Finance & Projects Committee and Council. In accordance with Financial Regulations 11f tenders will be opened on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**11. Electricity Contract Renewal**

Committee to consider the renewal of the one-year fixed contract that expires 31/3/2024.

**12. Report to Council**

To agree items for report to the next Council meeting on the 16th of January 2024.

**13. Media Contact**

To consider whether any items on this Agenda warrant a Media release, and, if so, to agree a Councillor to comment if applicable.

**14. Future Meeting Dates**

The next meeting of the Finance & Projects Committee will be on 5th March 2024.

**Any member who is unable to attend the meeting should send their apologies and reason to the Office prior to the meeting.**

## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/12/2023

Month No: 9

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>100 Champions Manor Hall</u>							
1001 Main Hall Hire	13,960	22,850	8,890			61.1%	
1002 Multi Purpose Room Hire	12,753	22,850	10,097			55.8%	
1003 Conference Room Hire	3,220	5,000	1,780			64.4%	
1004 Meeting Room Hire	5,549	1,500	(4,049)			369.9%	
1006 Annual Storage Charge	1,122	0	(1,122)			0.0%	
1007 Car park	920	500	(420)			184.0%	
1050 Rent from ESO Depot	1,100	1,200	100			91.7%	
1055 Rent from Office Use	37,000	37,000	0			100.0%	
<b>Champions Manor Hall :- Income</b>	<b>75,624</b>	<b>90,900</b>	<b>15,276</b>			<b>83.2%</b>	<b>0</b>
4000 Electricity	12,545	27,000	14,455		14,455	46.5%	
4005 Gas	551	2,120	1,569		1,569	26.0%	
4010 Water	420	900	480		480	46.7%	
4015 Sewerage	539	450	(89)		(89)	119.7%	
4020 Rates	15,885	17,000	1,115		1,115	93.4%	
4025 Cleaning	21,578	29,000	7,422		7,422	74.4%	
4030 Maintenance	20,965	16,000	(4,965)		(4,965)	131.0%	12,460
4050 PRS Licence	1,194	1,060	(134)		(134)	112.6%	
4125 Sanitary Contract	378	500	122		122	75.6%	
4130 Security	396	1,280	884		884	30.9%	
4135 Mobiles	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
4150 Fire Maintenance	147	500	353		353	29.4%	
4275 Insurance	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
<b>Champions Manor Hall :- Indirect Expenditure</b>	<b>74,597</b>	<b>97,410</b>	<b>22,813</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22,813</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>12,460</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>(6,510)</b>	<b>(7,536)</b>				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	12,460						
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<b>13,486</b>						
<u>110 Office Costs</u>							
4001 Rent for Office	37,000	37,000	0		0	100.0%	
4116 Card Processing/BACS/Bank Fees	45	0	(45)		(45)	0.0%	
<b>Office Costs :- Indirect Expenditure</b>	<b>37,045</b>	<b>37,000</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>100.1%</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>(37,045)</b>	<b>(37,000)</b>	<b>45</b>				
<u>120 Finance &amp; Projects</u>							
1076 Precept	442,251	442,251	0			100.0%	
1090 Interest Received	5,563	3,000	(2,563)			185.4%	

## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/12/2023

Month No: 9

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
1095 Leases & Wayleave	550	550	(0)			100.0%	
1255 Christmas Panto Income	35	0	(35)			0.0%	
1400 CIL Money Received	8,534	0	(8,534)			0.0%	
1450 Miscellaneous Income	3	0	(3)			0.0%	
1455 Town Mayor Charity	(571)	0	571			0.0%	
<b>Finance &amp; Projects :- Income</b>	<b>456,366</b>	<b>445,801</b>	<b>(10,565)</b>			<b>102.4%</b>	<b>0</b>
4000 Electricity	40	0	(40)		(40)	0.0%	
4020 Rates	(4)	0	4		4	0.0%	
4105 Office supplies	503	500	(3)		(3)	100.5%	
4110 Photocopier	2,109	2,000	(109)		(109)	105.4%	
4115 Postage	65	300	235		235	21.7%	
4116 Card Processing/BACS/Bank Fees	799	1,000	201		201	79.9%	
4120 Telephone	2,407	2,500	93		93	96.3%	
4135 Mobiles	131	300	169		169	43.6%	
4145 IT Work/Support	2,108	2,000	(108)		(108)	105.4%	
4200 Salaries	70,810	135,000	64,190		64,190	52.5%	
4205 Employer's NI	26,157	42,000	15,843		15,843	62.3%	
4210 Superannuation	28,528	45,000	16,472		16,472	63.4%	
4230 Payroll Contract	737	1,500	763		763	49.1%	
4240 Staff Uniform & Travel	237	1,000	763	54	710	29.0%	
4245 Training	1,067	3,000	1,933		1,933	35.6%	
4246 Training - Councillors	65	2,000	1,935		1,935	3.3%	
4247 Council Wellbeing	0	3,000	3,000		3,000	0.0%	
4250 HR Costs	1,725	1,500	(225)		(225)	115.0%	
4255 Subscriptions	2,133	2,000	(133)		(133)	106.7%	
4265 Marketing	2,293	2,500	207		207	91.7%	
4270 Audit	8,125	3,000	(5,125)		(5,125)	270.8%	
4275 Insurance	4,891	5,100	209		209	95.9%	
4280 Civic Budget	1,122	1,200	78		78	93.5%	
4285 Member's Expenses	0	300	300		300	0.0%	
4290 Member's Basic Allowance	4,280	10,320	6,040		6,040	41.5%	
4295 Loan Repayment	19,906	20,000	94		94	99.5%	
4300 IT Contract & Equipment	3,029	6,000	2,971		2,971	50.5%	
4305 Elections	0	3,400	3,400		3,400	0.0%	
4315 Grants	4,363	5,000	637		637	87.3%	
4325 Litter Control	1,100	1,100	0		0	100.0%	
4326 Defibrillator	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4327 Bleed kits	2,210	0	(2,210)		(2,210)	0.0%	
4801 Professional Fees	805	2,000	1,195		1,195	40.3%	
<b>Finance &amp; Projects :- Indirect Expenditure</b>	<b>191,740</b>	<b>305,020</b>	<b>113,280</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>113,226</b>	<b>62.9%</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>264,626</b>	<b>140,781</b>	<b>(123,845)</b>				

## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/12/2023

Month No: 9

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>200 Leisure General</u>							
1200 Allotment Income	332	350	18			94.9%	
1205 Bowls Club Income	4,500	5,100	600			88.2%	
1210 Christmas Lights Income	5,100	5,100	0			100.0%	
<b>Leisure General :- Income</b>	<b>9,932</b>	<b>10,550</b>	<b>618</b>			<b>94.1%</b>	<b>0</b>
4500 Play Schemes	2,625	2,750	125		125	95.5%	
4505 Open Spaces Maintenance	1,589	2,500	911		911	63.6%	
4506 Open Spaces Maint. (John Cox)	8,987	12,000	3,013		3,013	74.9%	1,300
4508 Marsh Farm Road Allotments	1,055	350	(705)		(705)	301.4%	600
4510 Play Area Running Costs	2,571	2,500	(71)		(71)	102.9%	
4515 Swimming Pool Subsidy	10,000	10,000	0		0	100.0%	
4520 Bowling Green Maintenance	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4525 Bowling Green Sinking Fund	0	4,600	4,600		4,600	0.0%	
4530 Christmas Lights	20,048	25,000	4,952		4,952	80.2%	
<b>Leisure General :- Indirect Expenditure</b>	<b>46,875</b>	<b>61,200</b>	<b>14,325</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,325</b>	<b>76.6%</b>	<b>1,900</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>(36,943)</b>	<b>(50,650)</b>	<b>(13,707)</b>				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	1,900						
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<b>(35,043)</b>						
<u>210 Bandstand</u>							
1230 Bandstand Income	167	500	333			33.3%	
<b>Bandstand :- Income</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>333</b>			<b>33.3%</b>	<b>0</b>
4600 Bandstand Expenditure	4,121	500	(3,621)		(3,621)	824.2%	4,000
<b>Bandstand :- Indirect Expenditure</b>	<b>4,121</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>(3,621)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,621)</b>	<b>824.2%</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>(3,954)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,954</b>				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	4,000						
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<b>46</b>						
<u>250 Community Events</u>							
1250 Christmas Fayre Income	1,970	2,500	530			78.8%	
1251 Senior Citizens Xmas Lunch Inc	230	200	(30)			115.0%	
1252 Film CMH Club Income	1,000	500	(500)			200.0%	
1255 Christmas Panto Income	1,275	0	(1,275)			0.0%	
1257 National celebrations	1,913	0	(1,913)			0.0%	
1258 Halloween Event Income	90	0	(90)			0.0%	
1600 Toddler Group Income	1,211	1,200	(11)			100.9%	

## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/12/2023

Month No: 9

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
1601 Youth Week Income	138	0	(138)			0.0%	
Community Events :- Income	<b>7,826</b>	<b>4,400</b>	<b>(3,426)</b>			<b>177.9%</b>	<b>0</b>
4100 Equipment	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4350 Youth Club Expenditure	8,805	1,000	(7,805)		(7,805)	880.5%	7,886
4540 Toddler Group Expenditure	149	1,000	851		851	14.9%	
4651 Christmas Fayre Expenditure	12,188	13,000	812		812	93.8%	
4652 Film Club CMH Expenditure	215	500	285		285	43.1%	
4653 Senior Citizens lunch Exp	698	550	(148)		(148)	126.9%	
4654 CMH Fun	1,352	1,750	398		398	77.2%	
4663 National Celebrations	9,816	5,000	(4,816)		(4,816)	196.3%	
4664 Youth Week	1,331	0	(1,331)		(1,331)	0.0%	2,000
Community Events :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>34,554</b>	<b>23,800</b>	<b>(10,754)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(10,754)</b>	<b>145.2%</b>	<b>9,886</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>(26,728)</b>	<b>(19,400)</b>	<b>7,328</b>				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	9,886						
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<b>(16,842)</b>						
<u>300 Environment General</u>							
4325 Litter Control	489	500	11		11	97.8%	
4328 Tree Works	5,910	3,500	(2,410)		(2,410)	168.9%	3,450
4700 Street Furniture & Signage	0	4,000	4,000		4,000	0.0%	
4705 Hanging Baskets	13,167	13,000	(167)		(167)	101.3%	
4710 Roundabout Sponsorship	1,837	2,000	163		163	91.9%	
4720 Fenn Maintenance	3,285	4,500	1,215		1,215	73.0%	
Environment General :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>24,689</b>	<b>27,500</b>	<b>2,811</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,811</b>	<b>89.8%</b>	<b>3,450</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>(24,689)</b>	<b>(27,500)</b>	<b>(2,811)</b>				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	3,450						
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<b>(21,239)</b>						
<u>310 Garden of Remembrance</u>							
1300 Garden of Remembrance Income	6,849	14,300	7,451			47.9%	
Garden of Remembrance :- Income	<b>6,849</b>	<b>14,300</b>	<b>7,451</b>			<b>47.9%</b>	<b>0</b>
4010 Water	83	150	67		67	55.1%	
4760 GoR Supplies	3,558	5,000	1,442	227	1,215	75.7%	
4765 GoR Maintenance	3,345	6,200	2,855		2,855	54.0%	
4770 GoR Security	2,377	5,221	2,844		2,844	45.5%	
Garden of Remembrance :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>9,363</b>	<b>16,571</b>	<b>7,208</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>6,982</b>	<b>57.9%</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>(2,514)</b>	<b>(2,271)</b>	<b>243</b>				

## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/12/2023

Month No: 9

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Grand Totals:- Income	556,763	566,451	9,688			98.3%	
Expenditure	422,985	569,001	146,016	280	145,736	74.4%	
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<u>133,779</u>	<u>(2,550)</u>	<u>(136,329)</u>				
plus Transfer from EMR	31,696						
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<u>165,474</u>						



ytgg Risk  
Assessment  
**HIGH** 0  
**MEDIUM** 0  
**LOW** 16

**South Woodham Ferrers Town Council  
INTERNAL AUDIT 2023-2024**

**AUDIT PLAN WITH COMMENTS / FINDINGS**

I am pleased to report to Members of the South Woodham Ferrers Town Council (the “Council”), that I have completed my interim internal audit of the Council’s records for the seven month period to 31 October 2023, following my audit visit and subsequent conversations on 29 November 2023. The traffic light system of “risk” has been used to highlight any areas for attention.

Councillors should be aware that my work cannot be relied upon to identify the occasional omission or insignificant error, nor do I actively seek evidence of breaches of trust or statute, neglect or fraud, which may have taken place. It is the responsibility of the Councillors of the Council to guard against such events, but if during my audit testing such events are discovered I am duty bound to disclose such events to the Council.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Town Clerk, Karen Atkins for her assistance given to me during my audit visit.

Area	Item	Comments / Findings Interim visit 29 Nov 2023	Comments / Findings Year-end Audit XX XXX 2024
Previous Audits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Date of last External Audit Certificate or Exemption Certificate for 2022-23</b></li> <li>• Comments if any</li> <li>• Publication on website.</li> <li>• Date of last Internal Audit Comments if any</li> <li>• Review of any items outstanding from previous internal / external audit reports.</li> </ul>	<p>PKF Littlejohn signed off the Report &amp; Certificate 2022-23 on 29 August 2023, there were no comments.</p> <p>F&amp;P 3 Oct 2023 Min FP165 noted the outcome of the External Audit and Council 17 Oct 2023 Min C542</p> <p>The AGAR and additional financial information has been published on the Finance webpage in a timely manner.</p> <p>The Internal Audit Report by Heelis &amp; Lodge dated 28 April 2023 considered by F&amp;P 13 June 2023 Min FP132. There were no items to follow up.</p>	

Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scan of the minutes of the Council's meetings and the Finance Committee.</li> <li>• <b>General Power of Competence (GPC) ?</b></li> <li>• Dispensations</li> <li>• S.40 LA&amp;A Act 2014 filming/recording</li> </ul>	<p>Following a review of how the Council conducts its business the new Committee Structure introduced in April 2022 has settled in well with the following main Committees reporting to full Council.</p> <p>Finance &amp; Projects Comm (F&amp;P)          Planning &amp; Environment Comm          Events, Community &amp; Leisure Comm</p> <p>Agendas and Minutes are available to view on the website.</p> <p><b>The Town Clerk confirmed this is an agenda item on the next Council agenda in January.</b></p>	
Code of Conduct/ Acceptance of Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date adopted</li> <li>• Any changes in elected/co-opted members since last Audit ?</li> <li>• DPI's complete</li> <li>• DPI's on website or weblink</li> <li>• New Governance Compliance</li> <li>• NEXT ELECTION ?</li> </ul>	<p>17 Councillors re-elected in May 2023 (20 Cllrs full compliment)</p> <p>Cllr Naslund and Piesse co-opted Council 22 Aug 2023 Min C518</p> <p>At the time of my visit there was 1 vacancy in the Woodville Ward currently being advertised for co-option.</p> <p>DPI's available to view on the Council's website. May 2027</p>	
Standing Orders and Financial Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have they been formally adopted and applied?</li> <li>• Have any changes been made since they were adopted or the last audit?</li> <li>• Have any changes been formally adopted by the Council?</li> <li>• <b>Virtual Meetings / Delegation to Clerk/RFO still in place?</b></li> <li>• <b>Updated re NALC Models SO's 2018 updated April 2022, Fin Regs 2019 ?</b></li> <li>• Two signature rule still in place?</li> </ul>	<p>Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were revised by the Town Clerk in line with the NALC Models and approved by Council 14 March 2023</p>	

Risk Management

- **Risk Assessments** – Are they:
  - Carried out regularly?
  - Adequate?
  - Reported in the minutes?
  - **Inspections of play equipt etc if carried out by staff/Cllrs have they been trained, accredited?**
  - **ANNUAL REVIEW ?**
- Insurance cover – is it:
  - Appropriate/Adequate?
  - LTA in place?
  - Reviewed regularly?
  - Fidelity Guarantee Cover £ (Balances + ½ Precept)
- Internal controls – are they:
  - Documented?
  - Adequate?
  - Reviewed regularly?
  - **Statement of Internal Control (SIC)?**
- Systems and Procedures – are they:
  - Documented?
  - Adequate?
  - Followed?
  - Reviewed regularly?

There is a Financial Risk Assessment document for the Council on the Policies page of the website completed by the Town Clerk dated 17 January 2023. There are no comments or recommendations against the “control measures” set against each subject heading. However, on the same webpage there is a Strategic Risk Register, which does have detailed “Notes/Mitigating Actions” against each area of risk.

The play area at the Village Hall is checked every morning by the fully trained ESO’s (accreditation valid until May 2025) completing a risk assessment and playground check list.

Insurance cover in place with Zurich Municipal from 1 June 23 to 31 May 2024, Long Term Agreement in place to 1 June 2025. As completed previously the Town Clerk will source three quotes when the renewal quote is due. Specialist brokers available are [www.jameshallam.co.uk](http://www.jameshallam.co.uk) and [www.clearcouncils.co.uk](http://www.clearcouncils.co.uk) (formerly BHIB based in Leicester)

F&P 13 June 2023 Min FP130.2 Cllr Kelly appointed Cllr for verification purposes such as bank reconciliation. **Quarterly verification**

The “Adequate and effective system of Internal Control and Internal Audit” document was last reviewed in January 2023 with the next review scheduled for January 2024. **Post Audit Note:** Since been agreed at F&P to be recommended to Council in January

The Policies webpage includes the following Policies Grants Policy and Grant Application Form (in the process of being amended/updated) Cllr Code of Conduct, Complaints, Civility & Respect, Press & Social Media, GDPR (and **Privacy Notice**) and Freedom of Information Policies. As well as the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations other “internal” policies include the IT Policy, Health & Safety and Dignity at Work Policies

<p><b>Budgetary Controls</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the annual budgeting process reported and approved by the Council? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Budget/Precept amounts minuted?</b></li> <li>○ <b>Review of All Reserves included as part of the Budget Setting Process?</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• Is the actual performance against the budgets reported to the Council during the year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Compare with Fin Regs?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are significant variances explained in sufficient detail?</li> </ul>	<p>F&amp;P Comm receive the bank balances and list of financial transactions since the last meeting.</p> <p>F&amp;P Committee 18 April 2023 Min FP110 agreed to form a Working Group to discuss the Reserves and bring back a report to a future meeting. The Town Clerk advised that the Working Group has never met <b>BUT was included when the budgets were discussed and agreed this year.</b></p> <p><b>Budget/Precept for 2024-25</b> F&amp;P 14 Nov 2023 Min FP179 recommend a Precept of £449,200 based on a Tax base of 6115.66 Band D = £73.45 an increase of £0.85 to Council. Council 21 Nov 2023 approved Min C558.1 2024-25 Budget £595,350 and C558.2 Precept £449,200 to be forwarded to Chelmsford City Council.</p>	
<p><b>Section 137 expenditure</b></p> <p><b>£9.93 FOR 2023-24</b> (£8.82 FOR 2022-23)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the cash limit for the year?</li> <li>• Is a separate account/analysis kept?</li> <li>• Has the cash limit been exceeded?</li> <li>• Have the spending powers been properly used and Minuted?</li> </ul>	<p><b>The S137 limit for 2023-24 announced increased by 12.5% (the RPI increase Sept 2021 to 2022) to £9.93</b></p> <p><b>If the Council adopts the General Power of Competence there will be no need to use the Section 137 power.</b></p>	
<p><b>Book-keeping</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cashbook - is it:</li> <li>• Fit for purpose?</li> <li>• Up to date?</li> <li>• Arithmetically correct?</li> <li>• Balanced regularly?</li> <li>• <b>Turnover above £200k pa ? Income &amp; Expenditure basis of accounting?</b></li> <li>• Record keeping and the arrangements in place to store previous year's accounts etc.</li> </ul>	<p>The Council uses the Rialtas Omega Cashbook, Sales &amp; Purchase Ledgers and the Purchase Ordering function.</p> <p>The Council accounts on an Income &amp; Expenditure basis.</p>	

<p>Petty Cash</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the amount of petty cash float been agreed?</li> <li>• Are all petty cash entries recorded?</li> <li>• Are payments made from petty cash fully supported by receipts / VAT invoices?</li> <li>• Are petty cash reimbursements signed for?</li> <li>• <b>Date of last petty cash reimbursement ?</b></li> <li>• Is petty cash balance independently checked regularly</li> </ul>	<p>No Petty Cash</p>	
<p>Payroll</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Who is on the payroll and are contracts of employment in place?</b></li> <li>• Who is the RFO?</li> <li>• <b>Annual Appraisal in place ?</b></li> <li>• Have there been any changes to the establishment during the year?</li> <li>• Have there been any changes to individual contracts during the year?</li> <li>• <b>Members Allowances in place and paid via payroll system?</b></li> <li>• Have new appointments and changes to contracts been approved and minuted?</li> <li>• Do salaries paid agree with those approved by the Council?</li> <li>• Have PAYE/NIC requirements been properly applied and accounted for?</li> <li>• Payroll outsourced?</li> <li>• <b>WORKPLACE PENSION IN PLACE</b></li> </ul>	<p>The Council currently has 5 employees –  Town Clerk – Karen Atkins (37hrs pw) made permanent from 9 May 2023 following successful completion of her probationary period  Environment &amp; Leisure Officer – David Smith (37hrs pw) started 2 May 2023  Admin Assistant – Debbie Edwards (20hrs pw)  Two ESO's – Shaun Blackmore (37hrs pw) and John Rogers (20hrs pw)</p> <p>Cllr Allowances = 10% of Basic Allowance set by Chelmsford CC F&amp;P 13 June 2023 Min FP129 to be tracked each year. NB not available to co-opted councillors.</p> <p>National Pay Award 2023-24 just been agreed (Nov 2023). It has been paid to staff in the Nov 2023 salaries.</p> <p>Payroll is outsourced to James Todd &amp; Co who provide the necessary HMRC and Essex Pension Reports as well as the payslips</p> <p>Essex Pension Fund available to eligible employees</p>	

<p>Payments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all payments recorded and supported by appropriate documentation?</li> <li>• Are payments minuted?</li> <li>• Review of DD's and SO's ?</li> <li>• <b>STAFF costs definition for inclusion in Box 4 for 2023-24, check parity for 2022-23 ? Currently includes salary, tax, NIC &amp; Pension (employee &amp; ers) + taxable benefits ( home working allowance, broadband &amp; phone allowance etc NOT incl.</b></li> <li>• Has VAT been identified, recorded and reclaimed?</li> <li>• Have internal control procedures been adhered to?</li> <li>• Contracts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What contracts exist?</li> <li>○ Compliance with SO's</li> <li>○ Have any new contracts or contract variations/extensions been awarded in the year?</li> <li>○ Procedures adopted for letting of contracts</li> <li>○ Have contract payments been made in accordance with the contract document?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>New BACs system via Unity Trust Bank in place from April 2023.</p> <p>Good system of verification &amp; certification of invoices for payment involving Council Officers and 2 Councillors who also approve the BACs payments. Payment schedules reported to F&amp;P Comm each month and payments listing published as part of the Agenda papers on the website.</p> <p>There are several SO's and DD's in place mainly linked with the regular utility services received from the likes of O2, BT, Barclaycard, Chelmsford CC, Total energies, British Gas and Crown Gas &amp; Power</p> <p>Staff costs definition used within the Omega Accounting package complies with the Statement of Accounts requirement for Box 4.</p> <p>VAT submissions to date –  2022-23 Qtr 4 £5,503 received 24 April 2023  2023-24  Qtr 1 £4,858 received 11 July 2023  Qtr 2 £8,874 received 6 Oct 2023</p> <p><b>Sample contracts/agreements in place.</b>  SLR Contractors Ltd – decoration of Champions Manor Hall (CMH)  Custom Fitted Blinds Ltd – replacement blinds for CMH  DPS Painting &amp; Decorating Ltd – Repainting of the Bandstand  CT Services Group – CMR Cleaning  JW Davis Enterprises Ltd – Open Space Contract  Green Recycling – Trade Waste</p>	
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<p>Receipts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all receipts recorded correctly?</li> <li>• Are all receipts promptly banked?</li> <li>• Precept, CTSG and Sect 136 payments</li> <li>• <b>Are income records inc allotments, burials, hirings adequate?</b></li> <li>• Are invoicing arrangements adequate?</li> </ul>	<p>CIL Policy – August 2023 CIL Monies 31 March 2023 = £26,981 Receipts in 2023-24 = £2,694</p> <p>F&amp;P 13 June 2023 Min FP125b Remote payment system SUM UP purchased for use with the toddler group and other events.</p> <p>Invoicing for hirings checked</p> <p>CMR Fees &amp; charges review - will be done on completion of the “upgrade works”.</p>	
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<p><b>Bank reconciliation &amp; PWLB Loans</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What current/deposit accounts exist?</li> <li>• <b>Investment Strategy recommended where bank balances are in excess of £100k.</b> FSCS aware ?</li> <li>• Are bank reconciliations regularly carried out for each account?</li> <li>• Level of Balances to Precept ratio</li> <li>• Are the cheque counterfoils, paying-in books and bank statements adequately referenced?</li> <li>• When was the last review of the banking arrangements?</li> <li>• Internet Banking/Corporate Card and if in place Financial Regs updated ?</li> <li>• Signature review (Two signatures required?)</li> <li>• Any PWLB loans ?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Bank account balances as at 31 Oct 2023 -</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Unity Trust Current (2312)</td> <td>- £516,723</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Santander Bus Saver (2723)</td> <td>- <u>£288,874</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total cash balance</td> <td>- <u>£805,597</u></td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Current FSCS rules as per the NALC Financial Topic Note – F05-15 extends the FSCS protection to “Small Local Authorities” defined (in this case) as having an annual Budget of below 500,000 Euros (currently approx.. £430k), the Topic Note advises that both Income and Expenditure should be below the threshold. SWFTC expenditure is above this threshold, hence the FSCS protection does not apply to the Council.</b></p> <p><b>However, this is not a reason for the Council to “do nothing” in terms of looking at its Investment Strategy. The Town Clerk had already started to look at other “saving deposit options”, I suggested other financial institutions that accept deposits from Parish/Town Councils One simple option would be to open an “Instant Access” deposit account with Unity Trust Bank. To maximise the interest potential I would recommend that delegated powers be given to the Town Clerk/RFO to manage the two Unity Trust a/cs without compromising the day to day business activity with subsequent retrospective reporting of bank transfers.</b></p> <p>F&amp;P 13 June 2023 Min FP125a Barclaycard in place with a spend limit of £5,000 per 6 week period</p> <p>F&amp;P 13 June 2023 Min FP130.1 Cllrs Eley, Shearring, Roberts and O’Brien as signatories for both banks (endorsed by Council Min C506.1)</p> <p><b>Four signatories should be viewed as the minimum number to signatories to allow for absences/resignations etc.</b></p> <p>PWLB loan outstanding at 31 March 2023 = £88k</p>	Unity Trust Current (2312)	- £516,723	Santander Bus Saver (2723)	- <u>£288,874</u>	Total cash balance	- <u>£805,597</u>	
Unity Trust Current (2312)	- £516,723								
Santander Bus Saver (2723)	- <u>£288,874</u>								
Total cash balance	- <u>£805,597</u>								



<p><b>Assets and Asset Register (AR)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are all the material assets owned by the Council recorded in an AR ?</li> <li>• Is the AR up to date?</li> <li>• Basis of Asset Values?</li> <li>• Are investments recorded?</li> <li>• Are the valuations regularly reviewed?</li> <li>• Does the AR show the insurance values ?</li> <li>• Digital Photographic evidence?</li> <li>• Is there a separate Inventory List of low value items (e.g. below the insurance excess levels) ?</li> </ul>	<p>F&amp;P 13 June 2023 Min FP131 noted the Asset Register as at 31 March 2023.</p> <p>The Asset Register will be checked during the year-end audit visit. There have been several items approved by the F&amp;P Committee that will be items to add to the existing Asset Register.</p> <p>The Town Clerk updates the asset register as soon as the individual items are in place and received</p> <p>The Solar Panels planned for CMR is an example.</p>	
<p><b>Year-end procedures Inc. AGAR</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the <b>2023-24 AGAR Statement of Accounts</b> agree with the cashbook?</li> <li>• Is there an audit trail from the financial records to the accounts?</li> <li>• Have debtors and creditors been properly recorded?</li> <li>• <b>Date of approval of 2022-23 AGAR &amp; Certificate of Exemption if applied</b></li> <li>• <b>PROOF of public rights provision during summer 2023 &amp; website– AIAR ICOs</b></li> <li>• <b>Public Inspection Period Minuted ?</b></li> <li>• New governance compliance regime - refer to new <b>Practitioners' Guide 2023</b></li> </ul>	<p>Year-end procedures to be checked at final audit</p> <p>The AGAR 2022-23 was approved by Council 20 June 2023 Mins C505.2 &amp; C505.3, the RFO had signed off the Statement of Accounts on 20 June 2023 before the Meeting started.</p> <p><b>Date of Announcement – 21 June 2023</b>  <b>Public Inspection period – 22 June to 3 Aug 2023</b>  <b>Evidence – Screen shot evidence to be provided by Vision ICT</b></p> <p>F&amp;P 13 June 2023 Min FP132 and Council 20 June 2023 Min C505.4 noted period of exercise of public rights</p>	

<p>Additional tests – (as necessary)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The procedures for the backing up of computerised records</li> <li>○ Council owned PC/laptop ?</li> <li>○ <b>Email security</b></li> <li>○ <b>Encryption of data?</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Trust Funds/Charities – Charity Commission filing?</b></li> <li>• Annual review of the effectiveness of Internal Audit inc. Appointment of IIA</li> <li>• <b>Website host and Webmaster and any changes?</b></li> <li>• <b>Website functionality &amp; accessibility NALC L09-18</b></li> <li>• <b>TRANSPARENCY CODE compliant especially for Exempt Authorities</b></li> <li>• <b>Post GDPR (May 2018)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Privacy Notice</b></li> <li>○ <b>Cllr email addresses?</b></li> <li>○ <b>Email disclaimer</b></li> <li>○ <b>Other matters inc DPO arrangements</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Ahead 4 manages the Council's IT requirements including hosting the emails, Office 365 licences and security arrangements.</p> <p>No charity involvement</p> <p>Council 17 Oct 2023 Min C542 – appointed IIA for 2023-24.</p> <p>Vision ICT</p> <p>The Town Clerk is the main “webmaster” but the Admin Assistant and Environment &amp; Leisure Officer also contribute to the management of the Councils website.</p> <p>Cllrs email addresses have been introduced from April 2023 similar the staff addresses eg <a href="mailto:debbie@southwoodhamferrerstc.gov.uk">debbie@southwoodhamferrerstc.gov.uk</a></p> <p>F&amp;P 13 June 2023 Min FP134 Town Clerk to advise all Cllrs that communication with old email addresses would cease on 30 June 2023. All Councillors use their email addresses.</p> <p>The Town Clerk is the DPO</p>	
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