

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 20 DECEMBER 2010 AT 7.30 PM IN THE ROBIN
ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

PRESENT: Councillor Miss C Geall in the Chair

Councillors, J Hedley, M McCormick, Dr L E Radford, P A Ruffles and Miss J C S Sartin.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs N L Villa, Town Clerk
Mr S Davies, Responsible Finance Officer
Miss M Challis (minutes)

295. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs A Emsley (adverse weather conditions), Mrs S Newton, (adverse weather conditions).

296. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr L E Radford Prejudicial Agenda item 7 (f) Grants
Hertford Town Council representative
on Hertford Youth Trust.

297. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Minutes of the Finance, Policy & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 27 September 2010 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

298. ACTION SHEET

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The pursuing of a solution for the Ashley Webb Shelter be deferred for 24 months.
- (b) The action sheet be received and noted.

299. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

300. CASTLE GROUNDS

The Committee received a verbal update on the situation regarding the Castle Grounds.

The Town Clerk had met with East Herts Officers to discuss the devolving of maintenance of the grounds to Hertford Town Council. The proposal is for Hertford Town Council to maintain the “green areas”, with an appropriate proportion of East Herts budget to cover the associated costs. East Herts would continue to maintain the walls, pathways, Ashley Webb Shelter and play area.

Members queried whether Hertford Town Council would be responsible for tree maintenance, and whether any contract or service level agreement would be inflation proof, to prevent increase costs in forthcoming years.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the responsibility of the trees would remain with East Herts Council, and that any service level agreement entered into with East Herts Council would include any potential inflationary increases.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee note the report.

301. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Committee considered the following applications and **RESOLVED** in accordance with its powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the Committee should incur the following expenditure, which in its opinion is in the interest of the area, or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure:

Hertfordshire Police was awarded £280 as a contribution towards the purchase of purse dipping bells and clips to issue to vulnerable members of the community.

Councillor Dr L E Radford left the room for the following discussion.

Hertford Youth Trust was awarded £1,000 towards the maintenance and replacement of capital items for their meeting hall.

Councillor Dr L E Radford returned to the room.

302. POLICING PLAN CONSULTATION

The Committee received a draft of the Hertfordshire Policing Plan for 2011 – 2014.

During discussion about a suitable response, the following points were raised:

- (a) Councillors found it difficult to comment on the items listed in the plan as presented; more clarification was required on some of the more high level, broad statements.
- (b) The Committee would like to know how Hertfordshire Constabulary would measure successes in a number of the areas listed on the plan.

- (c) Whilst supporting item 4.4, the Committee queried whether there were sufficient numbers in the neighbourhood team to meet the needs of Hertford.
- (d) Ref. items 5.6 and 5.6 – the Committee noted that new measures to be developed and would welcome more information in due course.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Town Clerk would draft a response in consultation with the Committee Chairman.

303. CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES

The Committee had received a report detailing the proposed opening times during Christmas and New Year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **approve** proposed opening hours.

304. PENSIONS POLICY

The Committee had received a policy statement detailing how the Council will exercise the discretions available to it within the Local Government Pension Scheme, as required by the Local Government Pension Scheme (Administration) Regulations 2008.

A minor amendment was suggested; the insertion of the word “normally” in the first line of item 2 of the Statement of Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **approve** the Pensions Policy for publication.

305. DEFAULT RETIREMENT AGE

The Government is currently consulting on the removal of the default retirement age (DRA). The Committee received a report detailing the changes required to the Council’s Personnel Policies to comply with the removal of the DRA.

The removal of the DRA will begin on 6 April 2011, with transitional arrangements covering the period until 1 October 2011.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) Should the Government proceed with the proposals as currently outlined, the Committee **approve** the removal of the Town Council’s retirement age from 6th April 2011
- (b) The Committee **approve** the transitional arrangements

- (c) Should the DRA not come into force as currently outlined, a further report detailing the Town Council's Retirement Policy be presented to the Committee.

306. **FINANCE**

(a) **Bank Reconciliations**

The Committee had received bank reconciliation summaries for September to October 2010.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the bank reconciliation summaries for September to October 2010 and requested that a summary spreadsheet showing month on month bank balances be provided with future reports.

(b) **Payment Schedules**

The Committee had received payment schedules from September to November 2010.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the payment schedules from September to November 2010.

(c) **1st Half Income and Expenditure 2010/11**

The Committee had received a report providing a commentary on income and expenditure in the first half of 2010/11.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the income and expenditure to 30th September 2010.

(d) **Debtor and Creditor Payment Terms**

The Committee received an update on the time taken for the Council to make payments to its suppliers and receive payments from its customers.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that:

The Committee notes the update on debtor and creditor payment terms.

(e) **Budget for 2011/12 (Second Draft)**

The Committee received a second draft of the budget and a presentation from the Responsible Finance Officer which highlighted the key projects planned by each Committee for 2011/12. It was noted that all the projects proposed by the various Committees could be undertaken whilst achieving the Council's aim of a 0% increase in precept for 2011/12.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee **approve** proposed and ongoing projects for the forthcoming financial year.
- (b) The Committee **recommend** a precept of £1,039,260, which represents a 0% increase in Band D Council Tax, to Full Town Council on 17th January 2011.

307. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

In view of the confidential nature of the following item, which relates to the business matters of other individuals and organisations, the public shall be excluded while the following item is discussed. This is in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

308. 2nd FLOOR SEED WAREHOUSE

The Committee had received a verbal report on the current situation regarding former tenants of the Seed Warehouse.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Town Clerk and Cllr McCormick draft a letter to be filed with any future appointed liquidators which expressed the concerns of the Council about the conduct of the tenant.

309. STAFFING UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal report from the Town Clerk on a staffing matter.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Committee Chairman, to negotiate salary reviews within the existing budget to aid retention of key personnel.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:20.