

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 28 JUNE 2010 AT 7.30 PM IN THE ROBING
ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

PRESENT: The Mayor, Councillor Mrs Brenda Haddock, in the Chair at the start of the meeting

Councillors Mrs A Emsley, Miss C Geall, M McCormick, Mrs S Newton,
Dr L E Radford and Miss J C S Sartin.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Mrs H Durbin (for part of the meeting)
Mrs N L Villa, Town Clerk
Ms T Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager
Mr S Davies, Responsible Finance Officer

84. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor Miss C Geall was elected Chairman for the forthcoming civic year. Cllr Miss Geall took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

85. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Mrs S Newton was elected Vice Chairman for the forthcoming civic year.

85 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Ruffles (Previous engagement)

86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr C Geall	Personal	Agenda item 9 Grants Policy Patron of Hertford Museum
Cllr J Sartin	Prejudicial	Agenda item 9 Grants Policy Trustee of Hertford Museum
The above interests only applicable if the Museum was discussed.		
Cllr H Durbin	Personal	Agenda item 10(d) Community Grants Family connection to 2nd Bengo Scouts Agenda item 10(f) Community Grants Member of Mudlarks Management Committee

87 THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Minutes of the Finance, Policy & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 19 April 2010 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

88 ACTION SHEET

A 'clean' report had been received from the Internal Auditor which would be circulated to all councillors.

Progress towards Investors in People continued, with the external assessment scheduled to take place in October 2010.

Delivery of the new vehicle had taken place and there were no proposals to proceed with the livery of the vehicle.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The action sheet be received and noted.

89 QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

90 TRAINING REPORT

The Committee had received a report detailing the scope and cost of the training which had been undertaken by officers over the previous twelve months. The significant effort made by officers and the Council to provide adequate training to the staff was noted along with the fact that a core curriculum of training to new members of staff was now available. It was confirmed that, at present, there would be no necessity for the 2010/11 budget of £7000 to be overspent.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee notes the report.

91 GRANTS POLICY

The Committee had received a report providing details of grants policies from other Councils with a view to reviewing the Council's policy in line with established best practice. It was noted that the Council's current policy of excluding places of worship and education establishments was not shared by the other authorities and it was therefore agreed that these exclusions should be removed from the revised policy. It was however noted that the Council would not normally support requests for funding usually covered by alternative statutory funding sources. It was proposed to keep the current spending limit at £1200 as a guideline only thus ensuring that in exceptional circumstances the Committee may grant a request in excess of the upper limit. Amendments to the grant application form were also discussed and it was agreed that section 10, which requested details of the number of members of the

organisation residing in Hertford, should be amended to ascertain details of the number of residents of Hertford who would benefit from the grant. An application form would be required for all applications exceeding £200.

The grant scheme was primarily available for capital projects as opposed to revenue funding and therefore grants would not normally be awarded towards operating costs of an organisation.

The Committee noted that the proposed revisions to the Grants Policy could lead to more challenging decision making given the budget available, however each application would continue to be treated on its own merit.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Council's Grants Policy be updated by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to reflect the recommendations above and that the revised version should be recommended to Full Town Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

92 **GRANTS**

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:

Note: The Committee requested that future grant reports include details of the previous grants awarded to the applicants, along with a running total schedule of grants awarded and balance available in each year.

Keech Hospice Care was awarded £500 as a one of payment towards its operating costs, however future applications for operating costs would not be considered, given that the grant scheme was primarily available for capital projects as opposed to revenue funding.

Country Bus Rallies was awarded £750 towards the group's expenses at Fun Day in May 2010. It was noted that this application was retrospective and the Committee requested that future applications be received prior to the event.

Folly @ The Folly was awarded £250 towards the advertising costs for its annual street party.

2nd Bengoe Scouts was awarded £75 towards the cost of the Patrol's participation in the 2011 World Scout Jamboree.

Hertford Town Council Football Club was awarded £500 towards the cost of the repair to the Clubhouse roof.

Mudlarks Community Garden was awarded £500 towards the cost of running a summer play scheme for young people with learning disabilities.

93. TOWN PLAN

The Clerk provided the Committee with a verbal report regarding progress towards the production of a Town Plan for Hertford along with a draft outline of a report which had been previously circulated. The production process was progressing slowly largely due to a lack of community involvement and the Committee expressed concern that some of the matters raised within the outline document would be unachievable. It may be difficult to position the finished document as having a community mandate as limited input had been received from community organisations. This may limit the strategic influence of the document.

The Committee recognised that considerable work had gone into the production of the draft document and it would therefore be extremely disappointing for work to be halted at this stage. It was however recognised that any plan produced would be a Council document as opposed to a community document and as such would need to be clear on the items over which the Council would have influence versus more aspirational items where the Council would be seeking to influence third parties. This was considered preferable to abandoning the project altogether. It was therefore agreed that a working group of Councillors be set up to work alongside the Clerk on the production of the document with input and feedback from all members of the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) A working group be set up, comprising Cllrs Miss Geall, McCormick and Miss Sartin to work alongside the Clerk towards the production of a Hertford Town Plan.

94. TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The Committee had received a report detailing a proposal to upgrade the Council's telephone system and the Finance and Administration Manager advised that a quotation had been received at £2800.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The proposal to upgrade the telephone system be approved at a cost of approximately £2800

95. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL

The Committee had received a report regarding proposed amendments to the Council's constitution, in particular the addition of a flag flying policy and a policy to formalise the use of the new Council logos, as well as any amendments to the Aims and Objectives of the Council that the Committee may consider necessary.

The Committee recommended adoption of the flag flying policy with amendments to Section 2.2 item 6 & 7, that the flag should only be flown at half mast for the day of death and the day of the funeral as opposed to the proposed day of death to day of funeral. Policy 4 was also amended to include 'at the discretion of the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader of the Council' for the flag to be flown on other occasions.

The adoption of the use of the new Town Council logos had previously been debated and recommended by the Development and Leisure Committee.

The Leader of the Council would feedback to the Town Clerk any changes considered necessary to the Aims and Objectives of the Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Finance, Policy and Administration Committee recommend the adoption of the Flag Flying Policy (with amendments) and Use of Council Logos Policy to Full Town Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.
- (b) Amendments to the Council's Aims and Objectives to be recommended to Full Town Council following feedback from the Leader of the Council.

96

FINANCE

(a) Bank Reconciliations

The Committee had received bank reconciliation summaries for March 2010 to May 2010.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the bank reconciliation summaries for March 2010 to May 2010.

(b) Year End Accounts 2009/10

The Committee had received a report detailing the year end accounts for 2009/10 along with the Annual Report and Financial Statement in the required FRSSE format for approval. It was noted that the accompanying Foreword to the report was unavailable at the time of the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee approves the accounts for 2009/10 and delegates authority to the Responsible Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to approve the Foreword to the Annual Report for 2009/10

(c) Payment Schedules

The Committee had received payment schedules from April 2010 and May 2010

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the payment schedules from April 2010 and May 2010.

(d) Non Cheque Payments

The Committee had received a schedule of Direct Debit and BACS payments made during the financial year 2009/10

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the schedule of Direct Debit and BACS payments made during the financial year 2009/10

(e) Debtors

There were no debtors as at 31 March 2010.

(f) Debtor and Creditor Payment Times

The Committee had received a report detailing the time taken for the Council to make payments to its suppliers and receive payments from its customers during the final two quarters of 2009/10. Actual time lines are within the Council's KPIs.

It was noted that whilst some hirers take longer to settle their accounts, all accounts had been settled at the end of the financial year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the report.

97. 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.

98 STAFFING

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the Customer Services Assistant (Events) was nearing the end of a fixed term contract of employment and

asked the Committee to consider the options relating to continued employment, or otherwise, of this staff member.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Customer Services Assistant (Events) be transferred to the permanent staff establishment with effect from 1st March 2011.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:40