

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 21 APRIL 2008 AT 7.30 PM IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

PRESENT: Councillor Miss C J Geall, in the Chair

Councillors J F Cook, Mrs S M Newton, R A Ruffles and
Miss J C S Sartin

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs H P Durbin
Ms N L Villa, Town Clerk
S Davies, Finance and Administration Manager
Mrs M E Aldrich, Administrative Secretary

305. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors S J Bright, J C Hedley, Mrs L E Radford and Mrs B M Wrangles.

306. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

307. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 21 January, 18 February and 17 March 2008 were approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

308. EMERGENCY ITEM

It was **RESOLVED** that:

An emergency item on staffing be discussed in closed session at the end of the meeting.

309. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Action Sheet be noted.

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

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

311. THE CASTLE - CAR PARKING

The Committee noted progress towards the installation of parking control measures in the Castle Grounds. The various options that were available to meet the Town Council's requirements were considered.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The appointment of Contractor A be approved, which included the installation of an Electro-Hydraulic system to the existing gates, as the option which caused minimal disruption to the surrounding area and which offered best value for money.

312. ASHLEY WEBB SHELTER

The Committee considered a reply from East Herts Council to this Council's letter of the 23 January 2008 regarding the future of the Ashley Webb Shelter.

Martin Shrosbree, Asset and Estates Manager, East Herts Council advised that the broken roof tiles, graffiti and other minor repairs to the shelter would be undertaken, but it was unrealistic to expect the problems of anti social behaviour in this area would not return in time if the shelter remained in its current condition

He considered there were three general options for consideration. These being:

- (a) Do nothing.
- (b) Modify the existing structure to honour the purpose of the original gift, but limit the potential for abuse. This could be achieved by removing the roof and parts of the structure, using the remainder as the basis for a pergola, or demolishing the structure completely.
- (c) Look for a commercial use (café etc) based around the existing structure or site which was commercially viable and self funding.

The future role of the shelter was being considered through the East Herts parks planning process and the Asset and Estates Manager stated that it would be helpful to know the views of the Town Council based on the options he had outlined.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The formation of a Working Group to proactively pursue a viable future for the shelter be approved.

- (b) The Working Group to comprise:

Councillors J F Cook and Mrs H P Durbin
Further members on the Working Group to be requested via the
Weekly Bulletin

- (c) The Asset and Estates Manager, East Herts Council be advised that the Town Council is forming a Working Group [to liaise or work with EHC] to consider all the options for the future of the Ashley Webb Shelter.

313. STRESS MANAGEMENT AND DRESS CODE POLICY

The Committee considered the new Stress Management and Dress Code Policies.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The new Stress Management and Dress Code Policies be adopted.

Councillor J F Cook abstained from voting and wished for it to be recorded.

314. ANNUAL DREPORT 2007/08

The Committee considered the draft annual report for 2007/08. This had been circulated during the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The proposed version of the 2007/08 Annual Report be approved.

The Committee also agreed that the format of the report was a good example to use for the Town Council's newsletter which was a requirement to achieve Quality Status.

Members had no objection to the use of the watermark for future Annual Reports, but in the appropriate pages where it did not detract from written matter.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman, Councillor Miss C J Geall thanked the Town Clerk for producing the annual report in such a tight timescale.

315. FINANCE - INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee received the report, together with recommendations, of the internal audit conducted by East Herts Council in December 2007.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The findings of the Internal Auditor be noted.
- (b) The Review of the Internal Audit for 2006/07 be approved as adequate and effective.
- (c) The formation of a small Working Group to conduct this review in future be approved.
- (d) The working Group to comprise:

Councillors J C Hedley and Miss C J Geall.

316. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The Committee received an updated report on the appointment of a new External Auditor.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) It be noted that the Responsible Finance Officer would be requesting the Audit Commission to appoint BDO Stoy Hayward to carry out a small council audit for 2007/08.
- (b) The appointment of Grant Thornton (UK) LLP for the audit of the accounts for 2008/09 and 2009/10 be noted.

317. YEAR END FIGURES (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE)

The Committee received the spreadsheets showing the 2008/09 base budget and expenditure to 31 March 2008.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) These be noted.
- (b) The cash flow be closely monitored over the next month.

318. YEAR END ADJUSTMENTS

The Committee received a report on the year end adjustments and the following additional adjustments:

Transfer to Building Maintenance Reserve

7250 Castle repairs and maintenance	201.31
7299 Castle CAPEX	1,495.80
6099 D&L CAPEX	<u>2,000.00</u>
	£ 3,697.11

Year End Accruals (additional) at 31.03.08

6196 TIC ticket sales (West End Theatre Managers Ltd)	684.00
6196 TIC ticket sales (Reg's Coaches)	205.47
7135 F&A Vintage Party contribution	<u>189.43</u>
	£1,078.90

Grants – Carryover **£650.00**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

These be noted.

319. PAYMENT SCHEDULES

The Committee received the Payment Schedules to date.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

These be noted.

320. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

In view of the confidential nature of the following items, which relate to business matters of other individuals and organisations, the public shall be excluded whilst the following items were discussed. This was in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1072.

321. PAST DUE BEBTS

The Committee received a report and schedule of debts outstanding for more than 90 days at 31 March 2008.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) Account Reference SOL01 in the sum of £264.00 be written-off.
- (b) Account Reference K&W01 in the sum of £6,694.58 – the Town Clerk should continue to press for payment in line with the proposed schedule of instalments.

322. STAFFING

The Committee received a verbal update on the position relating to the previous Town Clerk.