

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23 JUNE 2014 AT 7.30 PM IN THE ROBING
ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor Miss C Geall, in the Chair at the start of the meeting

Councillors: Dr L E Radford, P Ruffles, Miss J Sartin, Miss I Sigmac, A Stevenson and A Turner (for part of the meeting)

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr P Boyle
Cllr N Wilson (for part of the meeting)
Cllr Mrs B Haddock (for part of the meeting)
Cllr R Willis (for part of the meeting)
Ms N Villa, Town Clerk
Ms P Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager
Mr S Davies, Responsible Finance Officer

79. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Cllr A Stevenson be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

Cllr Stevenson took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

80. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Cllr Miss C Geall be elected Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

1940 – Cllr A. Turner arrived

81. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M McCormick (Work Commitment) and Mrs S Newton (Dep. Mayoral engagement)

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ruffles	DPI	Agenda item 9 – Community Grants	Holds a managerial role in the Horticultural Society
Cllrs Ruffles	DPI		Museum Trustee, should the Museum be discussed.

83. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Minutes of the Finance, Policy & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 17 March 2014 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

84. ACTION SHEET

Pinehurst

It was noted that contracts had been awarded for the provision of the play equipment and that funding had been secured. The lease arrangements were also at an advanced stage. The Chairman was also pleased to report that there had been a positive response to the consultation that had recently taken place at Pinehurst.

Service Level Agreement – Castle Grounds

It was noted that this had now been finalised with East Herts Council.

Lease – Museum

This was with the Museum, awaiting a response from the Chairman.

Lease – Mind

There had been no response from Mind, who had recently been taken over by another organisation, however it was understood that Mind would be relocating from the Seed Warehouse shortly.

Business Plan – Museum

A response was still awaited from the Chairman of the Museum.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The action sheet be received and noted.

85. YEAR END ACCOUNTS 2013/14

The Committee received a report detailing the year end accounts for 2013/14. The Mayor had sought clarification around overspends on certain budget codes, and had enquired whether these had received prior approval from Committee. Whilst some of the overspends had been beyond Council control, i.e. increased utility bills and election expenses, it was nevertheless clear that not all of the over budget expenditure had received prior Committee approval. Officers were

therefore reminded that this was a requirement going forward. It was however noted that Committee expenditure overall had come in below budget, which would set the Council in good stead for the current financial year.

The report included a range of recommendations, which were discussed and approved with minor changes. The recommendation regarding the increase to the CCTV reserve was considered unnecessary given that this reserve already showed a healthy balance. It was suggested that this balance be transferred to the grants budget, where there had been an increase in applications over the past year. It was requested that the grants budget be promoted further in order to attract new applicants.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **approves** the end of year financial statements as a fair and accurate record of the Council's financial position at the 31st March 2014.
- b) The Committee **recommends** that the Town Council approves the Accounting Statement and the Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return for 2014/15.
- c) The Committee **approves** that a balance of £5,000 should be transferred from the General Reserve to the Election Reserve.
- d) The Committee **approves** that a balance of £1,346 should be transferred from the General Reserve to the Grants Budget.
- e) The Committee **approves** that a balance of £5,000 should be added to the Memorial Repairs budget (code 5342) for 2014/15
- f) The Committee **approves** that a balance of £3,375 should be added to the Allotment Maintenance budget (code 5030) for 2014/15, in respect of a new surface for cars at Bengeo Allotments.
- g) The Committee **approves** that a balance of £971 should be added to the Community Grants budget (code 7180) for 2014/15 which was the unspent budget remaining at the end of the year.

Taking the above recommendations into account the General Reserve stood at £262,341.

General Reserve	263,687
Building Maintenance Reserve	114,660
CCTV Maintenance Reserve	42,802
Election Reserve	12,113
New Homes Bonus Reserve	138,451
LCTS Grant Reserve	41,997
TOTAL RESERVES	613,710

Note: The Committee adjourned at 8pm to allow the Town Council to meet to approve the Year End Accounts.

The Committee reconvened at 8.10pm

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

None.

87. 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:

Note: Cllrs Ruffles and Miss Sartin, both having DPI's in grant applications left the room during the discussion on the item.

Beth Emsley – World Scout Jamboree 2015 was awarded £200 towards the fundraising required for her attendance at the Scout Jamboree in Japan. The Committee requested that following the visit the Council receive feedback of the event.

Friends of Panshanger Park was awarded £500 towards the set up costs of this new Group. It was however requested that any future funding requests would not be considered if the request related to running costs. Funding for specific projects would be considered.

Hertford Horticultural Society had requested funding towards the prize giving in the vegetable section of the September show. The Committee approved the funding of £300.

Charlotte Yates – World Scout Jamboree 2015 was awarded £200 towards the fundraising required for her attendance at the Scout Jamboree in Japan. The Committee requested that following the visit the Council receive feedback of the event.

All Saints Church, Hertford – had requested funding of £600 towards the cost of cleaning the War Memorial in the Churchyard. Given the WW1 centenary commemoration this year, the Committee was happy to accede to this request.

East Herts – Diversionary Activities Group was awarded £200 towards the cost of summer diversionary activities for young people.

Hertford Youth Trust was awarded a grant of £500 towards the cost of redecorating the hall.

East Herts Citizens Advice Service had applied for a grant for new workstations. It was noted that the Service was in a challenging funding situation, and provided a much needed service to people suffering from financial hardship and therefore awarding a grant of £800.

The balance of the grant funding available after these applications were approved stands at £12,737.

88. PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE

A copy of the minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 27 May 2014 had been circulated to the Committee. These have yet to be approved by the Sub Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the report of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 27 May 2014.

89. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR USE OF HTC ACCOUNTS

The Committee had received a copy of a draft Social Media Policy for consideration. The Committee made several amendments to the document and requested that it be recirculated to members in its amended form prior to referral to the Town Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Having taken effect of the amendments, the proposed Social Media Policy for use of HTC accounts be **recommended** to the Town Council for adoption and inclusion in the Constitution.

90. NEW HOMES BONUS – TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS

(a) Bench, Parliament Square

The Committee received a report outlining a request from members of the public to consider the provision of a bench in Parliament Square to replace the two that were removed some years' ago.

The Committee considered such provision would enhance Parliament Square and would be an attractive place for members of the public to sit and was therefore happy to accede to the request, however the Committee was of the opinion that two benches would be more appropriate in that location rather than just one. It was noted that given the listed status of the War Memorial, the benches would likely to have to be of bespoke and high quality design in order to meet the Conservation requirement. Permission would also be required from Hertfordshire Highways to replace the benches.

(b) Enhancements to Maidenhead Street

The Council had previously agreed in principle that a proportion of the New Homes Bonus could potentially be used to enhance Maidenhead Street. The Committee requested that a scoping report be prepared, led by Cllr Miss Jane Sartin, to determine, recommend and progress some enhancements to Maidenhead Street, Honey Lane, Dolphin Yard and Evron Place and to establish why some of the shop units had been empty for so long. It was hoped that initial thoughts would be available for the next Committee meeting in September.

Cllr Miss Sartin confirmed that she was prepared to accept the assignment provided there would be some officer support for the project. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be the case.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **approves** a proposal to contribute £3,000 towards the cost of two benches on Parliament Square to be funded from the New Homes Bonus.
- (b) Cllr Miss Sartin prepare a scoping document of proposals for enhancements to Maidenhead Street, Honey Lane, Evron Place and Dolphin Yard.

91. FINANCE

(a) Bank Reconciliations

The Committee received the bank reconciliation summaries for the months ending Feb, March, April and May 2014.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the bank reconciliation summaries for months ending February, March, April and May 2014.

(b) Payment Schedules

The Committee received the payment schedules for March, April and May 2014.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the payment schedules for March, April and May 2014.

(c) Past Due Debtors

It was noted that there were no debtors over 90 days.

(d) Non Cheque Payments, second half year 2013/14

The Committee received the payment schedule for non cheque payments for the second half of the year 2013/14.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the payment schedule for non-cheque payments for the second half of the year 2013/14.

(e) Salary Apportionments

The Committee had received a report to review the staff salary apportionments between Committees. The Committee requested further information to substantiate the figures going forward with another column added to the report to indicate the average time spent on different tasks on a monthly basis. The Committee was particularly interested on time spent by officers on venue hire of the Downshire Suite and Millbridge Rooms. It was requested that a report be referred to the Committee annually as part of the budget setting process.

It was **RESOLVED** that

The Committee notes the report.

(f) Internal Audit

The Committee received the end of year audit report for 2013/14 and it was noted that there were no issues or concerns. The Committee thanked the Finance Manager for his management of the accounts over the previous year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the report of the Internal Auditor.

92. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

In view of the confidential nature of the following items, which relate to the business matters of other individuals and organisations, the public shall be excluded while the following items are discussed. This is in accordance the

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

93. STAFFING REVIEW

The Committee received an updated report from the Town Clerk on the proposed new staff structure.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee approve the proposals contained within the document subject to an amendment to the number of hours allocated to a new post, which were approved at 7 hours per week initially, with consideration to an increase in hours if it proved necessary and
- b) The Committee instruct the Town Clerk to work with the Council's HR advisors to commence a consultation with staff on the proposed new structure.
- c) The Committee delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to prepare a report detailing the outcome of the consultation and any subsequent recommendations for consideration by either Finance, Policy and Administration Committee or Full Town Council (as appropriate)

94. LEASE UPDATE

The Town Clerk provided an update on the current position regarding leases at both the Seed Warehouse and the Castle. It was noted that a Castle tenant's lease was due for renewal in December 2014 and the Committee considered whether it wished to renew the lease on the existing terms.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee delegate authority to the Town Clerk to agree Heads of Terms for the renewal of the Castle lease.

The meeting closed at 22.00.