

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3 OCTOBER 2011 AT 7.30 PM IN THE ROBIN
ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

PRESENT: Councillor Miss C Geall, in the Chair

Councillors: Mrs B Mansfield, P Moore, M McCormick, Mrs S Newton, Dr L E Radford, Miss J Sartin, Miss I Sigmatic and Dr A Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr P Boyle
Cllr P Ruffles
Mrs N James, Town Clerk
Mr S Davies, Responsible Finance Officer
1 Member of the Press

217. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

218. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Miss J Sartin declared a Prejudicial Interest in matters relating to Hertford Museum as she is a trustee

Cllr Miss C Geall declared a Personal Interest in matters relating to Hertford Museum as she is a patron.

The Chairman reminded Members that they may declare an interest at any stage during the meetings should it become necessary.

219. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Minutes of the Finance, Policy & Administration Committee meeting held on Monday 27 June 2011 be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

220. ACTION SHEET

The Chairman noted that the newly appointed Internal Auditors will be visiting the Council this week.

The Finance Manager updated the Committee on the progress towards finding a replacement tenant for the top floor of the Seed Warehouse. There are currently two or three prospective tenants in contact with the managing agent.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The action sheet be received and noted.

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

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

222. EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2010/11

The Chairman advised the Committee that the audit for 2010/11 was now closed and the auditors report was complete. Aside from a note regarding a minor adjustment in relation to the statement of reserves, the auditors made no other comment. The accounts were unqualified.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **receives a** report from the External Auditor for the accounts for 2010/11.

223. 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:

The Community Grant Budget for 2011/12 was £13,000, with an additional £4,902 rolled forward from 2010/11. The Committee followed the approved grant criteria which stated that grants would not normally be awarded for general revenue expenditure, but for items of capital expenditure. The Committee noted some minor amendments to the report submitted in relation to grants approved at the last committee and the total sum of grants awarded to date this year was recalculated accordingly.

Hertford and Ware Sea Cadets be awarded £1000 towards the purchase of new boats.

Sele Farm Community Centre. This organisation had requested £1,200 towards the cost of alterations to the Centre in order to provide an additional storage area. The Committee had asked for further information which had been provided and the organisation was therefore awarded £1,200.

224. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Committee received a report providing an update on the Council's work on the Investors in People Award (IIP). It was noted that the scheme was a nationally accredited process which is recognised as bringing significant benefits to organisations that embarked on the process. Hertford Town Council remains one of the very few Town Councils to gain accreditation.

The Town Clerk explained that in order to demonstrate continual improvement required for maintenance of the accreditation, an improvement plan had been drawn up in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the IIP Assessor. Members were asked to comment on this plan and forward any suggestions or comments to the Town Clerk.

The Committee requested that an updated version of the plan which demonstrated the progress towards each goal be provided to the next meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee notes that Hertford Town Council has achieved the Core Standard of Investors in People Award and continues to work towards the Health and Wellbeing Award
- (b) The Committee approves the attached action plans as part of the IIP continual improvement requirement and welcomes further comments from Members as appropriate.

225. CASTLE GROUNDS

The Town Clerk advised Members of the latest position concerning maintenance of the Castle Grounds. It is hoped that detailed plans and specifications will be available for the next meeting. It was noted that the Town Council has still not had a response from the County Council regarding the Moat Garden and the County Councillors were asked for their assistance to expedite a response.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** verbal update from the Town Clerk on the Castle Grounds.

226. CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

227. PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report recommending that a Sub Committee be set up to discuss all matters relating to staff pay and other personnel issues.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that:

- a) That this Committee **recommend** the creation of a Personnel Sub Committee, with a membership of five Councillors: Councillors P Boyle, Miss C Geall, M McCormick, Dr Mrs L Radford and A Stevenson to the meeting of the Full Town Council on the 17th October 2011.

228. FINANCE

(a) Bank Reconciliations

The Committee had received bank reconciliation summaries for May, June and July 2011

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the bank reconciliation summaries for May, June and July 2011.

(b) Payment Schedules

The Committee had received payment schedules June, July, August and September 2011. Clarification was provided to Members in respect of several entries by the Finance Officer.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the payment schedules from June, July, August and September 2011

(c) 1st Quarter Income and Expenditure

The Committee had received details of the 1st Quarter Income and expenditure for 2011/12

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the 1st quarter Income and Expenditure for 2011/12.

(d) Budget Items for 2012/13

The Committee had received a report outlining the 1st draft of the budget for 2012/13. Each Chairman summarised the discussions held in their respective Committee meetings and it was noted that these discussions are continuing, with the aim of identifying the priority projects whilst keeping the overall increase in precept as low as possible.

Cllrs J Sartin and P Ruffles left the room.

Of particular note on the FPA Committee budget proposals was the request from Hertford Museum to increase their grant funding for 2012/13. Members

understood that inflationary pressures were putting pressure on the Museum budget with salary costs being of particular concern. Members were minded to support a small increase in the Town Council's funding. However, it was difficult for the Committee to fully understand the context of the request as there was little supporting documentation and therefore no conclusion could be made at this meeting. The Vice Chairman was asked to make contact with the Museum Curator to provide some additional clarity concerning the pressures that the museum is facing.

An updated version of the budget, incorporating the changes recommended by the Committees will be presented to the next meeting.

It was noted that if all the projects were adopted as proposed, this would lead to an increase in the precept in excess of 8% and this was unlikely to be supported. Some decisions re priority projects would therefore need to be made.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Following input from the other Committees during the next meeting cycle, a further budget report be presented to the Committee meeting due to be held on 19th December.

Cllrs J Sartin and P Ruffles returned to the room.

(e) Medium Term Financial Plan

The Committee received the Medium Term Financial Plan for the years 2012 to 2017.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee noted the Medium Term Finance Plan for the years 2012 to 2017.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.15.