

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of the public present.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 18th May 2005 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr N J Chard (Chairman)
Cllr P Chambers
Cllr N G R Clarke
Cllr N W Light
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk
Cllr D E Cracknell

F/3774 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L C Ford, Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan and Cllr B H Terry.

F/3775 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

F/3776 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th April 2005, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

F/3777 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members considered the Monthly Financial Reports (*Annex 'A'*). It was noted that there were no Summary Budget Reports for this first month of the financial year and that the first of these reports for 2005/06 would be presented to the Committee in July 2005. A report detailing the final financial position for 2004/05 would be presented for consideration by the Committee in June 2005.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the No. 1 account be approved.
- 2) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be approved.
- 3) That the list of Petty Cash payments be approved.
- 4) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.
- 5) That the Inter Account Transfers be authorised. The reports were signed by Cllrs Chard and Light.

F/3778

LLOYDS TSB BANK ACCOUNTS

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that there had been several problems recently with regard to authorised signatories for the Council's bank accounts. In order to clarify matters, it was necessary to pass a resolution to enable the continuation of the accounts and to give the Town Clerk, as the Responsible Finance Officer, the authority to administer the accounts on the Council's behalf. There was also a need to re-confirm the list of councillors who were authorised to sign cheques.

In addition to this, members received a report from the Finance Manager proposing that the Council's accounts with Lloyds TSB be consolidated. It was noted that the Council operated five bank accounts, but that there was only a need for two; one cheque account on which interest would be earned and one business instant access account for receipt of the precept and other sums from the District Council, which would also earn interest. It was therefore proposed that the remaining three accounts be closed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the resolution from Lloyds TSB (*Annex 'B'*) be approved.
- 2) That all members of the Policy & Finance Committee be authorised to sign cheques.
- 3) That the 'Imprest' cheque account and the 'Business' instant access account held by Lloyds TSB be retained.
- 4) That the 'Rent Deposit' account, 'Deposit' account and 'Number One' cheque account held by Lloyds TSB be closed.
- 5) That the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk be mandated to sign cheques up to the value of £1,000 and any two authorised members be mandated to sign cheques of any value.
- 6) That the Finance Manager be authorised to administer transfers of funds between the bank accounts to secure effective financial control.

F/3779

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Chairman reported that the Christmas Lights Working Party had now met to consider quotations received for this year's Christmas lights. It was noted that the Working Party would be interviewing three companies, one of which would be selected to supply and install the lights. It was suggested that the Council should enter into a three-year agreement with the chosen company in order that more lights could be provided in the first year.

The Chairman informed members that the cost of the infrastructure would be approximately £7,000. This was higher than anticipated, as there was a need to install new electricity boxes in the High Street and Southampton Road. In addition, the catenary erected in 2004 would require an annual structural test.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the unspent funds from 2004/05 be taken back out of reserves to be used to fund the infrastructure for Christmas lights.
- 2) That the action taken by the Christmas Lights Working Party be approved.
- 3) That the Council enter into a three-year agreement for the supply and installation of the Christmas lights.
- 4) That the Chamber of Trade be requested to release funds accumulated last year to assist with the provision of the infrastructure costs.

**F/3780
PICNIC AREA**

The Town Clerk reported that the Forestry Commission could supply wooden picnic benches at a cost of £325 each and it was hoped that the Rotary Club would pay for one bench and repair another. In addition, the District Council had agreed for the Town Council to take on the responsibility for the maintenance of seats and benches in the Picnic Area.

Members noted that the District Council had invited the Town Council to take delegated powers for the issuing of licences for posters and banners and the authority to remove those that are unauthorised. The Town Clerk advised against the issuing of licences due to the fact that there was no planning consent for the display of advertisements on the Picnic Area fence and the amount of staff time required to administer such a scheme.

Members considered what type of posters/banners would be unsuitable. It had been suggested that those promoting commercial ventures should be removed. However, some members felt that these could be invaluable to the town.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the invitation from the District Council offering the Town Council delegated powers to remove posters and banners be accepted.
- 2) That licences be not issued for the display of banners and posters on the Picnic Area fence.
- 3) That all signs relating to events not in Ringwood be removed
- 4) That signs erected in excess of two weeks prior to an event or left in place more than a week after the event be removed.

**F/3781
RETENTION AND DISPOSAL SCHEDULE**

Members considered a Retention and Disposal Schedule for Council records (*Annex 'C'*). It was noted that there was an error in section 7.7, in that information relating to superannuation on individual pay files should not be destroyed, but kept indefinitely.

RESOLVED: That the Retention and Disposal Schedule be adopted.

**F/3782
EYESIGHT TESTS AND ASSISTANCE TOWARDS GLASSES**

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report (*Annex 'D'*). It was noted that a provision of £20 towards the cost of eye tests and £30 towards the cost of glasses required for DSE use had been included in the budget. The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that the District Council had agreed grants of £20 for eye tests and £49 towards glasses this financial year.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Policy on Eyesight Tests and Assistance Towards Glasses be adopted.
- 2) That grants payable in 2005/06 be £20 for eye tests and £49 towards glasses required for DSE use.

F/3783
URGENT BUSINESS

i) Members' Allowances

The Town Clerk reported that the District Council had recommended that Members' Allowances be increased by 2.9% from £584 to £601.50 per annum, to take effect from 17th May 2005.

RESOLVED: That Members' Allowances be increased to £601.50 per annum, with effect from 17th May 2005.

ii) Land Management Information System (LaMIS)

The Deputy Town Clerk advised members of a new mapping system aimed at Parish at Town Councils, which combined Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs and included a variety of information such as rights of way, listed buildings and SSSIs. The LaMIS system offered a simple and easy to use desktop software package for viewing, interrogating, manipulating and recording map-based information. A one-year subscription, to include quarterly updates, could be purchased for £327.49.

RESOLVED: That the Council subscribe to LaMIS for one year at a cost of £327.49.

F/3784
EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That under section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. (*Annex 'E'*).

F/3785
SALARIES

Members received information about changes to the National Joint Council salary scales for Town Clerks and Deputy Town Clerks and discussed arrangements for their implementation. Members also considered enhancement of the Temporary Finance Officer's salary and a change in the job title to reflect the additional work being undertaken by the post holder.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the changes to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk's salary scales be approved and implemented as agreed with effect from 1st April 2005.
- 2) That the job title of the officer appointed to cover the Finance Officer's maternity leave be amended to Finance Manager to reflect the change in duties carried out.
- 3) That changes to the Finance Manager's salary scale with effect from 1st April 2005 be approved.
- 4) That the cost of the changes in 2005/06 be met from Reserves.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.55pm.