

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of public present.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 20th December 2006 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr P Chambers (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr M F J Daly
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr N W Light
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan
Cllr B H Terry

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager

F/4019 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr D E Cracknell.

F/4020 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

F/4021 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2006, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

F/4022 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members considered the Monthly Financial Reports attached to these minutes as *Annex 'A'*.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be authorised. Cllrs Chambers and Chard signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Chambers and Chard signed the report.
- 3) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.
- 4) That the Inter Account Transfers be authorised. Cllrs Chambers and Chard signed the report.

F/4023 ROLE OF MEMBERS AND MEMBERS TRAINING

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Annex 'B'*), which proposed that a document be introduced to clarify Members' roles and help inform Members of their training requirements. The report also outlined proposals for Members' training, which, if accepted, would be used to produce a programme of training for implementation after the whole Council elections in May 2007, with briefing sessions for prospective councillors during January and February 2007.

RESOLVED: That a budget bid of £1000 be made for 2007/08 for Member training purposes.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the description of the Role of Councillors be approved.
- 2) That the overall training programme outlined in paragraph 3 of Annex 'B' be approved.
- 3) That arrangements be made for two pre-nomination briefing sessions to be held for prospective candidates in late January/early February 2007 with briefing sessions being led by appropriate Members and officers.
- 4) That HAPTC coasters be distributed to cafes and clubs in the town.
- 5) That, as a general principle, Councillors be only appointed to the Planning, Town & Environment Committee if they are prepared to attend appropriate briefing sessions on the role of the Town Council in the determination of planning applications.
- 6) That officers undertake investigation into the use of external training providers on matters relating to the Code of Conduct and the Town Council's role in determining planning issues.

F/4024

ACCESS AUDIT REPORT FOR GREENWAYS

Members considered the Technical Officer's report (*Annex 'C'*). It was noted that the Council needed to take reasonable steps to comply with legislation and the report recommended that all items be costed so that Members would have the opportunity to consider the suitability of each proposal.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That all items identified in the survey be costed.
- 2) That the 'programme of implementation' be approved to enable the most desirable items to be carried out in the current financial year and for further reports to be submitted to members on which work should be undertaken, taking into account the definition at paragraph 2.4 of Annex 'C'.

F/4024

COMMITTEE BUDGET 2007/08

Members considered a Report and Appendices in respect of:

- (1) Expenditure items included in the Budget for 2006/07,
- (2) New Budget Proposals for 2007/08 and
- (3) The Revised Budget 2006/07 and Original Budget 2007/08 Schedules for the Policy & Finance Committee.

The Finance Manager reported that the revised estimate for 2006/07 was less than the original estimate, due in the main to an underspend on the Festival and an increase in rental income and interest received.

It was noted that it had not been possible to agree a Christmas lights scheme with the Chamber of Trade and Commerce in 2006. However, the Town Clerk hoped that a more active working party could be established for 2007, with the local businesses being more involved.

New Budget Proposals

Festival – it was noted that the 2006 Festival had cost the Council £1,800. It was therefore agreed to reduce this bid to £2,500.

Greenways Committee Room redecoration – it was agreed to delete this item.

Police Community Support Officers – Cllr Ford reported that the number of PCSOs assigned to the New Forest had been reduced from 30 to 19 and these would be in place by April 2007. Cllr Clarke felt it would be premature to make a bid for PCSOs until Members could review the effectiveness of the reorganised Police force. However, after some discussion it was agreed to make this bid a priority, but that the funding be conditional on the PCSOs carrying out enforcement duties under the Clean Neighbourhood legislation.

Part Time Administrator – the Town Clerk Town reported that as the Council was getting more involved in the town, officers' workloads had greatly increased and it was therefore suggested that a part-time administrator be employed on a 12-month temporary basis to produce agendas and minutes. It was agreed to reduce this budget to £7,000 as it was expected that the post would not be filled until summer 2007. A job description would be submitted to members for approval in the New Year.

Technical Officer – it was agreed that this cost could be met from the temporary staff budget and this item was therefore deleted.

Newsletter – it was noted that, in order to become a Quality Council, the Council must produce a quarterly newsletter.

Greenways extension – it was agreed to delete this item from the budget for 2007/08 as it was expected that works would not be carried out until 2008/09.

Cllr Mrs Ford left the meeting at 8.30pm.

Following detailed consideration of the Reports and Schedules, it was:

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Expenditure Report in respect of the Budget Provision for 2006/07 (*Annex 'D'*) be noted.
- 2) That the Committee's prioritised Budget Proposals for 2007/08 (*Annex 'E'*) be approved.
- 3) That the revised Budget 2006/07 and Original Budget 2007/08 for the Policy & Finance Committee (*Annex 'F'*) be approved.

F/4025

COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2007/08

Members considered a Report and Appendices on the Council's budget and precept for 2007/08. The Town Clerk reported that £50,000 had been taken from the Council's reserves in 2006/07 and that there was a need to replace this in 2007/08.

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee

It was agreed to defer items 2, 5 and 13 in the new budget proposals to 2008/09 and to reduce item 8 to £1000.

Planning, Town & Environment

It was agreed to reduce the bid for street lighting to £1000, to delete the item for bus shelters and to defer the item for lighting the footpath across Carvers to 2008/09.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the base budget for Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, as set out in *Annex 'G'* be approved.
- 2) That the new budget proposals in *Annex 'H'* for Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, as amended at the meeting, be accepted and included in the Council's overall budget for 2007/08.
- 3) That the base budget for Planning, Town & Environment Committee, as set out in *Annex 'I'*, be approved.
- 4) That new budget proposals in *Annex 'I'* for Planning, Town & Environment Committee, as amended at the meeting, be accepted and included in the Council's overall budget for 2007/08.
- 5) That the base budget for Policy & Finance Committee, as set out in *Annex 'F'* be approved.
- 6) That the new budget proposals in *Annex 'E'* for Policy & Finance Committee be accepted and included in the Council's overall budget for 2007/08.
- 7) That the Council's overall net budget of £342,050 for 2007/08 be approved (*Annex 'J'*)
- 8) That the Council approve a transfer of £21,260 from the general reserve for 2007/08.
- 9) That the Council approve a precept of £320,790 for 2007/08.

**F/4026
GRANT AID**

Members considered an application for grant aid from Ringwood Rotary Club towards Christmas Eve Festivities in the Market Place.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £100 be awarded to Ringwood Rotary Club towards the Christmas Eve Festivities in the Market Place.

The Finance Manager left the meeting at 9.00pm.

**F/4027
REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS**

Members considered the Town Clerk's report and noted that the revised Standing Orders had been based on the NALC model.

Standing Order 12 - The Town Clerk reported that an existing standing order regarding the period of office of Town Mayor had been omitted from the proposed new document. Members considered whether the period of office should be limited and agreed that, as the Town Mayor could be re-elected or not on an annual basis, it was not necessary to impose a restriction.

Standing Order 14 – 'To receive reports of District and County Councillors' was inserted.

Standing Orders 22, 23, 29 & 30 - Members agreed the number of motions and questions that each councillor could submit at a meeting should be limited to no more than three and that any questions should not exceed 100 words, including any preamble.

Standing Order 47 – Members agreed that, on a majority vote of the Members present, meetings should end at 'such other time as may be determined'.

Cllr Light left the meeting at 9.50pm.

Having debated each paragraph, it was

RECOMMENDED: That the Standing Orders as to Meetings and Standing Orders as to General Procedures at *Annex 'K'*, as amended at the meeting, be adopted.

F/4028
SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

Members considered a revised schedule of meetings for May 2007, which would allow all meetings to take place after the elections.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the Annual Assembly be moved to Wednesday 11th April 2007.
- 2) That the schedule of meetings for May 2007 be amended as follows:
 - 2nd May – no meeting
 - 9th May – Annual Town Council Meeting
 - 16th May – Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee
 - 23rd May – Policy & Finance Committee
 - 25th May – Planning, Town & Environment Committee
 - 30th May – Council

F/4029
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EVENT ON HEALTH ISSUES

It was noted that this event was being organised jointly by Dorset and Hampshire Patient and Public Involvement Forums and would take place on the morning of 29th January 2007 in the Highcliffe area.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Mrs Sullivan be authorised to attend the event and her reasonable expenses be paid.

F/4030
URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

F/4031
EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw. (*Annex 'L'*).

F/4032
TECHNICAL OFFICER

Members considered a recommendation from the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee to extend the Technical Officer's contact for a further twelve months to December 2007.

RESOLVED: That the Technical Officer's contract be extended for twelve months to December 2007 and costs associated therewith be met from existing budgets.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55pm.