

OPEN SESSION: There were three members of the public present, one of whom gave notice that she wished to speak on an item on the agenda.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 24th October 2007 at 7.00pm

Apologies

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr D E Cracknell and Cllr L C Ford.

Declarations of Interest

There were none.

PRESENT: Cllr J D Heron (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr M F J Daly
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine
Cllr B H Terry

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager
Richard Eldred, Technical Officer
Cllr M Urwin (*left after F/4175*)
Cllr Mrs A Wiseman
Rachel Giles, Student Adviser
James Fullick, Student Adviser

F/4171

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2007, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

F/4172

STUDENT ADVISERS

The Chairman welcomed Rachel Giles and James Fullick who had been appointed by Ringwood School as Student Advisers to the Committee.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Student Advisers had the same role as officers and were at the meeting to advise but not to vote. In addition, it was noted that they would not always have to leave when confidential matters were discussed. However, as with the current practice adopted for Council staff, there would be some occasions when students would be requested to leave, dependent on the nature of the business to be discussed.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

F/4175

WORD ON THE STREET PROJECT (WOTS)

Mrs Frances Bowen, a member of the WOTS committee updated Members on the organisation's activities. She reminded Members that a survey undertaken by a Youth Worker on behalf of the organisation had identified the need for youth provision for 13 to 19 year old NEATS (not in employment, education or

training), who generally don't access normal provisions offered in the town. They had therefore been fundraising for a detached youth worker and double decker bus, so that they could provide a service at times and locations in the town to suit the young people. The bus had now been purchased and it was intended to involve the young people in its design and refurbishment. The organisation had received some funding towards the refurbishment and was also hoping to attract sponsorship and generate income by selling advertising space on the exterior of the bus. The bus would be driven and staffed by volunteers, but it was also intended to fund a detached youth worker to build relationships with young people. It was also noted that the local Police had given the project its full support.

Mrs Bowen asked if the Council would be prepared to contribute towards the project. The Chairman asked that the Council be provided with a copy of the organisation's business plan to enable Members to consider this request at a future meeting of the Committee.

It was noted that there were several different organisations involved in youth provision in the town and the Town Clerk suggested that a meeting be organised for everyone to share ideas and ensure no gaps or duplication. He offered use of the Council Chamber for such a meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee consider the request for funding from the WOTS committee at a future meeting and that a copy of their business plan be provided to facilitate this discussion.

F/4173

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

Cllr Terry asked for the balance of developers' contributions held by the District Council. It was agreed that this information would be provided in the annual budget report in future.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Chard signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Chard signed the report.
- 3) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.
- 4) That the Inter Account Transfer be authorised. Cllr Heron and Chard signed the report.
- 5) That the Finance Manager's report and Summary Budget Reports be received and noted.

F/4174

EXPENDITURE PLANS

The Finance Manager reminded Members that the Council had agreed an indicative base budget of £316,000 for 2008/09 and indicated that there could be up to £36,000 available for new projects. Such bids could include one-off projects for the benefit of residents of the town.

Members were asked to think about what improvements in service they envisaged for the coming year and to inform the Town Clerk prior to the next meeting for possible inclusion in the Committee's Budget for 2008/09.

RESOLVED: That this information be noted.

F/4176
CCTV

The Town Clerk reported that the District Council had now reviewed future funding of the CCTV scheme and had devised a formula based on the number of cameras in an area. As a result, the Town Council's contribution would increase from £5,200 to £9,301 for 2008/09. It was noted that New Forest District Council would continue to meet over 90% of the revenue and capital costs of the scheme.

The District Council would be carrying out a further review of CCTV and the Town Clerk suggested that, as the majority of cameras in the town were located in the Furlong Car Park, they be asked to look at the distribution of cameras as part of this review. He felt that it may be more appropriate to move some cameras to other areas of the town such as Southampton Road and Carvers. However, it was noted that this may not be practical.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the request for an increased contribution be noted and included in the budget proposals for 2008/09.
- 2) That, as part of its review, the District Council be requested to look at the location of the existing cameras and decide whether they are in the most appropriate places.

F/4177
DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

Members considered the Technical Officer's report (*Annex 'B'*) and noted progress on the programme of implementation. In addition, he had prepared detailed schemes for the provision of a ramped access at the rear of Greenways, paved parking areas and footpath to the front entrance; enlarging the reception area to better accommodate wheelchairs and creation of a disabled toilet. Members considered whether it was reasonable to proceed with these schemes, based on the cost and whether or not they were deliverable.

A quotation of £7,000 had been received to provide disabled access to the rear of the building, including two disabled parking bays, a ramp to the back door and paving to the front door. Members felt that it was not necessary to provide two parking bays. Also, there would be no need to widen the footpath to the front door as disabled visitors would be able to access the building through the rear door. It was noted that one disabled parking bay and a ramp to the rear door could be provided for approximately £3,100. There were some issues with the design of the ramp and it was suggested that the Technical Officer review the design in order to minimise costs and report back to the Committee for final approval.

It was noted that wheelchair users were able to access the building through the front door, although the space available did not meet the requirements of the legislation. Although detailed plans had been drawn up, it would not be possible to achieve the required area as there was insufficient space to accommodate this. However, there was scope to improve the reception area and the Technical Officer would be looking to provide a second low level counter underneath the existing counter, to be brought into use when wheelchair users visit the office.

It was further noted that there was not sufficient space to convert one of the existing toilets to a disabled toilet and it would therefore not be possible to achieve this provision.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the progress report be noted.
- 2) That it would not be reasonable for the Council to proceed with provision of a disabled toilet, enlarging the reception area or widening the footpath from the rear of the building to the front door.
- 3) That the Technical Officer review the design of the ramp to the rear door of Greenways and report back to the Committee with final costs for approval.

The Chairman left the meeting at 8.30pm. Cllr Rippon-Swaine took the Chair.

F/4178
FURLONG CAR PARK

The Town Clerk reported that the standard of delivery of the District Council's consultation document on the Furlong Car Park had been poor and that, as a result, the deadline for responses had been extended until the end of October.

It was noted that Cllr Mrs Wiseman had distributed the consultation document in the Bisterne area. Also, there had been active consultation with Ringwood School and each student had been given a copy of the document.

As a result of concerns raised, the Town Clerk had asked the District Council to include an item on the agenda for the next Town Centre Steering Group to discuss how any development would improve the street scene and the viability of the high street. It was important to ensure that any new development does not destroy the viability or character of the town.

RESOLVED: That this information be noted.

Cllr Heron returned at 8.45pm and re-took the Chair.

F/4179
RINGWOOD FESTIVAL

Members considered the minutes of Ringwood Festival Steering Committee meeting held on 15th October 2007 (*Annex 'C'*). The Town Clerk reported that there would be a change in the way that the Festival would be delivered as lead members would deal with different aspects of the event to minimise resource implications on the Town Council.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Festival Steering Committee meeting held on 15th October 2007 be received and the proposals therein be approved.

F/4180
RINGWOOD SHOPPING AND SERVICES GUIDE

The Town Clerk asked if the Council wished to advertise in the 2008 edition of the Ringwood Shopping and Services Guide.

It was noted that the sales literature referred to the Guide being available to view on town council websites.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That no advert be placed in the 2008 edition of the Ringwood Shopping and Services Guide.
- 2) That a hyperlink to the Ringwood Shopping and Services Guide be included on the Town Council website.

F/4181
RINGWOOD AND FORDINGBRIDGE TALKING NEWS

The Town Clerk reported that he had received a proposal from the Chairman of Ringwood and Fordingbridge Talking News to produce an audio version of Council Newsletters at a cost of £20 per issue.

RESOLVED: That the Ringwood and Fordingbridge Talking News be authorised to produce an audio version of Council Newsletters at a cost of £20 per issue.

F/4182
HAMPSHIRE PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE

The Town Clerk reported that the Hampshire Partnership Conference - The Sustainable Community Strategy and New Local Area Agreement would be held in Alton on Tuesday 27th November and asked if any Member wished to attend.

RESOLVED: That no member attend the Hampshire Partnership Conference.

F/4183
AIR TRAINING CORPS CIVILIAN COMMITTEE

It was noted that Cllr Ford had attended the last meeting of the Air Training Corps Civilian Committee and felt that it would benefit the Council to be represented at future meetings.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Ford be appointed as the Council's representative on the Air Training Corps Civilian Committee.

F/4184
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 'D'*)

The Technical Officer and Student Advisers left the meeting.

F/4185
COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Members considered the options available for future distribution of the Council's newsletters.

It was noted that Salisbury Newspapers would provide for free inclusion of the newsletter within the Avon Advertiser, together with a summary in the Forest Journal and inclusion of the newsletter on the Forest Journal website. From the saving created, it would be possible to increase distribution by producing additional copies to be placed in locations such as the library.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the offer from Salisbury Newspapers to publish the Council's quarterly newsletter in the Avon Advertiser free of charge be accepted.
- 2) That up to 15% of appropriate private advertising be allowed on the page.

F/4186
MOUNT PLEASANT LANE

Members discussed correspondence relating to the right of way through Mount Pleasant Lane.

RESOLVED: That this matter be referred to the November meeting of the Full Council for further consideration.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50pm.