

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

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on 21st January 2009 at 7.00pm

Apologies

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Ford, Cllr Urwin and Cllr Clarke.

Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

PRESENT: Cllr J D Heron (Chairman)
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine (Vice Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr B H Terry
Cllr B Woodifield

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator
James Fullick, Student Advisor
Bryannie Thurston, Student Advisor

F/4342

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2008, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

F/4343

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

The Finance Manager drew members' attention to the fact that £250,000 of reserves due for reinvestment had been placed with Abbey again, but that the interest rate available was lower. Allowances in the budget forecasts had been made for the reduced interest rates available in the current climate.

The Finance Manager also informed members that the full £175,000 has now been paid by New Forest District Council (NFDC) from developers' contributions to Ellingham & Ringwood Rugby Club (*Item 2 (e) 2.3 attached in Annex 'A'*). The Town Mayor requested that updates on expenditure of developers' contributions for Ringwood be circulated to members as and when received from NFDC. The Town Clerk agreed this could be done, but that the information was not currently provided by NFDC in a very useful format.

The Town Clerk commented that a tender process was being put in place for IT support services and indicated the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman would be involved in the tender process.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 3) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.

- 4) That the Inter Account Transfer be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 5) That the Finance Manager's report and Summary Budget Reports be received and noted.

ACTION Martin Townsend

F/4344

ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

The Audit Commission's certificate had been received for the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2008, and all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met. The Audit Commission did refer to the internal auditor's recommendations, a report on which will be brought to the February meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report on the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2008 be noted.

ACTION Martin Townsend

F/4345

RINGWOOD FESTIVAL

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee attached as *Annex 'B'*. Pete Alvis was experiencing great difficulty obtaining sponsorship for 'Ringwood Rocks', due to the economic downturn.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 5th January 2009, and the proposals therein, be approved.

ACTION Sue Godwin

F/4346

DATE OF ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

Members considered holding the Annual Town Assembly on the same date as the Annual Meeting (Wednesday 6th May 2009) instead of on Wednesday 22nd April 2009.

RECOMMENDED: That the Annual Town Assembly be moved from 22nd April to the same date as the Annual Meeting on 6th May 2009.

ACTION Claire Perrens

F/4347

NOMINATION TO NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Members were informed that, unfortunately, Cllr Clarke has had to withdraw, for health reasons, from standing for election as the New Forest National Park Authority representative for Quadrant 2. Cllr Heron would be prepared to stand and his nomination would be seconded by Bransgore Parish Council.

RECOMMENDED: That Cllr Heron be nominated to represent Councils within Quadrant 2 on the New Forest National Park Authority.

ACTION Claire Perrens

F4348

COMMUNITY PLANNING

Members considered Information Sheet 1.4 issued by New Forest District Council, which gives guidance to Town and Parish Councils on their role in the preparation of Community and Town Plans.

In his report (*attached as Annex 'C'*), the Town Clerk had recommended a number of amendments (*attached as Annex 'D'*), which had since been discussed with Chris Elliott (NFDC Head of Development Control).

RECOMMENDED: That the amendments to Information Sheet 1.4 shown in *Annex 'D'* be supported.

ACTION Claire Perrens

F/4349

TOWN PLAN – SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Members considered inviting Planning, Town & Environment Committee to arrange for the Economy Group, originally established in connection with the Town Plan, to prepare a Town Design Statement to guide any future development proposals throughout the Town. The Town Plan Design Statement would be prepared in consultation with New Forest District Council and appropriate residents, local organisations and commercial interests. The Town Clerk had discussed this idea with Chris Elliott and requested the advice and support of a planning officer, to ensure the outcome is feasible.

RECOMMENDED: That the Planning, Town & Environment Committee be invited to prepare a Town Design Statement, under the leadership of the Chairman, at a time to be at his discretion.

ACTION Claire Perrens

F/4350

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & PRESS

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 'E' attached*).

F/4351

FIRST FLOOR OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

Members considered arrangements for re-letting the offices at the end of the current lease period at the end of June 2009, as the current tenant is retiring. The Committee noted that the sub-tenant had expressed an interest in continuing to occupy part of the office accommodation and had made an offer of the rental they would be prepared to pay.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That an evaluation on the rental value of the offices be obtained from a local and a national agent.
- 2) That at this stage the offer by the sub-tenant be not accepted in order to ensure that such occupation did not affect the Council's ability to let the remainder of the accommodation.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4352
HEALTH & SAFETY

Members considered the appointment of a consultant to undertake a review of existing policies and procedures. Provision is included in the base budget for this work.

RESOLVED: That a Health & Safety professional be appointed to staff on a short-term contract.

ACTION Jo Stannard

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.45pm.

Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.

RECEIVED & ADOPTED

28th January 2009

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

TOWN MAYOR