

OPEN SESSION:

There were two members of the public present. Mr J Stride wished to make a statement regarding Ringwood Loyalty Card Scheme – please see notes attached.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on 21st October 2009 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr J D Heron (Chairman)
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine (Vice Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr B Woodfield

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator
Cassie Ware, Student Advisor
Simon Hookins, Student Advisor
Alyson Greenfield, Finance Officer
Cllr Cole
Cllr O'Reilly
Cllr Wiseman

The Chairman welcomed the Student Advisors, Cassie Ware and Simon Hookins.

F/4467

APOLOGIES

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr B Terry and Cllr Urwin.

F/4468

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr O'Reilly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Danny Cracknell Pocket Park (F/4470) as she lives close to the area. She made a statement and left the room, without taking part in the discussion or decision made.

The Town Mayor, Cllr Ford, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in F/4485 Town Twinning Advertisement, as a close colleague and friend of the person in question. Cllr Ford left the room and took no part in the debate or decision made.

F/4469

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

F/4470

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

Members also considered the Finance Manager's report regarding budget and funding available for the development of Danny Cracknell Pocket Park (*please see Annex 'B'*). The Chairman commented that he had received comments from local people concerned about the

amount of money to be spent on the Park, especially given the difficult economic climate. The Town Clerk emphasised that this scheme would not be funded from the Precept. Funding would be raised mainly from developers' contributions, which were earmarked for such purposes; he also stated that if these funds were not spent they could be lost. Improving access to the Millstream and this area had been a need identified in the Town Plan consultation process. Cllr Wiseman suggested it should be made clear to residents how the project would be funded. The Town Clerk said that a Press Release would be issued and residents invited to view a display of the proposals in the Committee Room.

Cllr O'Reilly declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Danny Cracknell Pocket Park (F/4470) as she lives close to the area. She made a statement in which she stressed the need for lighting to avoid antisocial behaviour and that this should be put in place early on, to avoid vandalism. Cllr O'Reilly left the room, without taking part in the discussion or decision made.

Simon Hookins, Student Advisor, commented that this project, although expensive, would bring long-term benefits and questioned how much difference lighting would make to the prevention of vandalism. Cassie Ware also agreed that lighting might not be necessary and was concerned the lights could be unpopular with local residents. Other Members commented that the lights would, however, also provide a safer environment for residents. The Town Clerk commented that the issue of lighting had not been rejected by the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, but would be investigated separately to avoid delaying the scheme and losing the offer of funding from the Living Rivers Scheme, which had just been increased from £8,000 to £10,000.

Cllr Chard requested that he be recorded as voting against the recommendation relating to the Danny Cracknell Pocket Park.

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.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That a supplementary estimate of £51,000 for the development of the Danny Cracknell Pocket Park be approved;
- 2) That developers' contributions of £41,000, subject to further discussions between the Town Clerk and the District Officers, and the increased grant of £10,000 from Natural England, be used to finance the scheme;
- 3) That funds for the woodland floor specialist plants, picnic bench and access track, shown as additional items, be requested from Developers' Contributions;
- 4) That funding be sought from Hampshire County Council to enable the bridge to be refurbished;
- 5) That at this stage, no additional signage showing the name of the Park be included in the scheme;
- 6) That offers from the public to sponsor individual elements of the scheme be welcomed; and
- 7) That research into the possibility of lighting in the park be undertaken as a separate project, in order to avoid delaying implementation of the main scheme.

ACTION Martin Townsend / Terry Simpson
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F/4471

CAPITAL PROJECTS – GRANT FUNDING

Members considered the report (*Annex 'C'*) presented by the Finance Officer. A number of grants could only be made to a registered charity, so a partner charity would need to be identified. The Town Mayor proposed that in the Olympic year, 2012, it would be a good idea to have a large sign to the effect that Ringwood welcomed visitors to the Olympic Games and promoting the Town (*see item 6 of Annex 'C'*).

RESOLVED: That the Finance Officer's report on Capital Projects – Grant Funding, with proposals for future potential applications for funding of projects, be noted.

ACTION Alyson Greenfield

F/4472

ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009

The Finance Manager reported that the Audit Commission's certificate had been received for the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2009, and that all relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had been met. The Audit Commission referred to the internal auditor's recommendations, an update report on which would be brought to the November meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report on the Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2009 be noted.

ACTION Martin Townsend

F/4473

FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2010/11 TO 2013/14

Members considered the Finance Manager's report attached as *Annex 'D'*.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the report on the Financial Strategy attached as *Annex 'D'* be noted; and
- 2) That the indicative revenue budget level for 2010/11 be noted; and
- 3) That each Committee be requested to follow the guidelines (1) to (4) in paragraph 7.2 in the attached *Annex 'D'* when preparing their budgets for 2010/11

ACTION Martin Townsend / Chairmen of Committees (No. 3)
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F/4474

RINGWOOD FESTIVAL

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee attached as *Annex 'E'*. Members considered appointing a replacement for Cllr Woodifield on the Steering Committee.

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

RECOMMENDED: That a replacement for Cllr Woodifield be appointed to the Festival Steering Committee at the Full Council Meeting on 28th October.

ACTION Sue Godwin

F/4475

CHRISTMAS FREE CAR PARKING TRIAL

The Committee considered a request from New Forest District Council to nominate a date in December for one afternoon free parking to encourage Christmas shoppers. The Chairman suggested the date should coincide with Chamber of Commerce's Late Night Shopping Day of Friday 4th December.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the agreement of the Chamber of Commerce, 4th December be the date nominated for the free car parking trial.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4476

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Members considered the District Council's Independent Remuneration Panel review of the Allowance Scheme and how this affected the Town Council's allowances, which were set as a percentage of District Councillors' allowances.

RESOLVED: That no special review be requested and members allowances continue to be determined on the existing basis.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4477

SOUTHAMPTON ROAD ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Members considered ownerships and responsibilities for maintenance of street furniture and features following completion of the scheme for Southampton Road (*Annex 'F'*).

RESOLVED: That the ownership and maintenance of the items listed in 1.1 of *Annex 'F'* and of a standpipe, if this can be included in the scheme, be agreed in principle.

ACTION Jo Stannard

F/4478

POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

At its July meeting, the Committee had renewed the agreement in respect of PCSOs for a further two years. At that time, it was understood the fee would continue at the existing level of £6,000 per annum. The Council had now been notified that the annual costs had increased to £7,000 per annum. Members were asked to consider whether to authorise continuance of the agreement at the higher charge. Cllr Rippon-Swaine had received one of the new reports provided on the PCSOs' activities and was concerned whether Ringwood was getting value for its money, in terms of the time spent in the Town by the PCSOs. The Chairman considered £1,000 to be a large increase, but that it should be supported this year. However, a careful review should be made before future funding was agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the agreement for PCSOs be renewed for a period of one year only at £7,000;
- 2) That Hampshire Constabulary be advised that the Council is concerned at the significant increase at a time of low inflation and the manner in which the increase was notified to the Town Council; and
- 3) That Hampshire Constabulary be advised that the arrangement will be reviewed within the one year period to determine whether it should be extended for a second year.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4479

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 'CHARTER' WITH LOCAL COUNCILS

Members considered the Town Clerk's report on the Hampshire County Council / Hampshire Association of Local Council's questionnaire on the review of the Charter with local Councils (*Annex 'G'*). The Town Clerk felt that the word Charter should be changed to 'Partnership'.

RECOMMENDED: That the response to the Hampshire County Council / Hampshire Association of Local Council's questionnaire as shown in *Annex 'G'* be submitted

ACTION Sue Godwin

F/4480

DISTRICT COUNCIL ACCESSIBLE SERVICES

New Forest District Council's survey on accessibility of services was aimed at individuals and Members were invited to complete this in their personal capacity. However, there were two general issues within the questionnaire on which the Committee was invited to respond as representatives of Ringwood residents.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That a response be made to Q2) telephone contact, on which the Council has previously made representations, that improvements should be made to the telephone answering system; and
- 2) That a response to Q16) which suggests information can be delivered by post offices and supermarkets be made that Town and Parish Councils should be given the opportunity to act as information points before this is offered to post offices and supermarkets.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4481

EMPOWERED COMMUNITIES CONFERENCE

Members were invited to attend the National Association of Local Council's Larger Councils' Conference and Exhibition on 2nd December at the Royal National Hotel, London.

RESOLVED: That no Member be appointed to attend the Conference

ACTION Terry Simpson

**F/4482
GREEN PAPER ON CARE**

Town councils have no direct responsibilities for the types of care and support issues covered by this Green Paper; those responsibilities resided with County and Unitary authorities. However, Members were asked to consider whether, as an important part of their role was to represent residents' views at grass roots level on any issues that may affect their well being, any response should be made (*Annex 'H' attached*).

Cllr Clarke commented that the core issue was how the provision of care would be funded. The Town Clerk said that in the past there were local warden controlled units to enable people to look after themselves for longer before needing full care. Such units provided by local authorities had not been maintained. Cllr Clarke said that 'care in the home' was the new preferred method of care by the Primary Care Trust. Access was a key problem.

RECOMMENDED: That Members be requested to identify responses to be considered by Full Council on 28th October.

ACTION Terry Simpson

**F/4483
COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW (CGR)**

Members considered whether a CGR relating to Boundaries and Electoral Arrangements was required for Ringwood.

RECOMMENDED: That a Community Governance Review be not requested.

ACTION Terry Simpson

**F/4484
EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & 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 'I' attached*).

The Town Mayor, Cllr Ford, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in F/4485 Town Twinning Advertisement, as a close colleague and friend of the person in question. Cllr Ford left the room and took no part in the debate or decision made. Cllr Ford left the meeting at 8.39pm.

**F/4485
TOWN TWINNING ADVERTISEMENT**

The Town Clerk updated Members on action taken with regards the incorrect publication of the date of the Twinning Meeting in a local newspaper. A further letter had been received from the newspaper to the effect that it was not prepared to meet the Town Council's requests and a request had been received under the Freedom of Information Act for further information.

RESOLVED: That the response from the newspaper be noted and the Town Clerk be instructed to proceed in the manner determined at the Committee Meeting on 16th September (*Minute F/4465 refers*)

ACTION Terry Simpson

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

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

RECEIVED & ADOPTED
28th October 2009

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN