

Present: The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor C Pye
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor Mrs G Dodds
Councillor A Follett
Councillor C W Gibson
Councillor S Smith (substituting for Cllr D Nimmo-Smith)
Councillor Dr P Skolar
Councillor I Reissmann

In attendance: Mr M W Kennedy – Town Clerk
Mrs H King – Committee Administrator
Mrs L Jones – HTC Accountant
1 member of the press

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Mayor called for nominations.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs G Dodds and seconded by Councillor I Reissmann that Councillor A Follett be elected.

Councillor Mrs J Bland then proposed, seconded by Councillor S Smith, that Councillor Dr P Skolar be elected

There being no other nominations, and following a vote, it was **RESOLVED**

that Councillor A Follett be elected Chairman of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor A Follett took the chair

2. **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Councillor A Follett called for nominations.

It was proposed by Councillor C W Gibson, and seconded by Councillor Mrs G Dodds, that Councillor I Reissmann be elected.

Councillor Mrs J Bland then proposed, seconded by Councillor S Smith, that Councillor Dr P Skolar be elected.

There being no other nominations, and following a vote, it was **RESOLVED**

that Councillor I Reissmann be elected Vice-Chairman of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

3. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Councillors received and considered the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** that the terms of reference for the Finance Strategy and Management Committee be received and re-adopted for 2010-11.

4. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Dr B Wood and D Nimmo-Smith.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES AND THE MEMBERSHIP THEREOF**

Value for Money & Resources Sub-Committee

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood, felt that the current membership had been successful, although it would be desirable if another HRG member joined the group to reflect the balance of the Council and proposed that Councillor I Reissmann be included.

Councillor Dr P Skolar emphasised that VFM was the most important sub-committee and agreed that all the current members had worked very well together.

Councillor A Follett noted that the Group had not met recently and hoped to arrange a meeting within the next couple of weeks.

It was **RESOLVED** that the 2010-11 membership of the VFM Sub-Committee would comprise:

Councillor Dr B Wood
Councillor Mrs J Bland
Councillor A Follett
Councillor I Reissmann
Councillor Dr P Skolar

Legal Group Sub-Committee

It was **RESOLVED** that the 2010-11 membership of the Legal Group Sub-Committee would comprise:

Councillor Dr B Wood
Councillor C Pye
Councillor A Follett
Councillor Dr P Skolar
The Mayor, Councillor Mrs J Wood

LTP3 Working Group

It was **RESOLVED** that the 2010-11 membership of the LTP3 Working Group would comprise:

Councillor A Follett
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor Dr B Wood

Councillor I Reissmann reminded the meeting that the IT Review Group (despite not being active at the moment) should not be lost sight of.

7. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

8. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 27 April 2010 were received, approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman Councillor A Follett.

9. **PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillors received and considered the Progress Report and made the following comments:

HTC Estate Inspections

The Town Clerk pointed out that a reminder, to carry out the next round of inspections, had appeared in his latest newsletter.

Maintenance/refurbishment of council assets

The Town Clerk's paper detailing the work schedule for 2010-11 was virtually complete. £10k had been included to cover energy saving initiatives. The amount could be accommodated within the existing planned maintenance budget.

Henley Information Centre

The Town Clerk advised the meeting that an amended planning application had been submitted to cover the signs outside the Town Hall. The new signs would be wooden and hand painted. It was expected that the application would be accepted.

10: 10 Campaign

A general discussion took place on the timing of signing up to the campaign. Councillor Mrs G Dodds pointed out it would only be the Town Council joining the campaign, not the town itself. As the percentage saving was an aspiration (rather than a requirement), then there was no barrier to the Council joining. It was noted from the NIFES DEC report that the Town Hall roof was not insulated. If this situation was remedied, then this improvement could achieve the 3% saving on its own.

Strategy Document

Councillors received and considered the Strategy Document which had been updated since the last meeting and made the following comments:

- 2.4c This item had been completed and the last column (Time) should be updated to reflect that position.
- 2.5.5 Responsibility should be amended to NT from AG. Although the initial report on phase 1 did go to FS&M, the date in the last column (Time) should be amended to 31.12.10 when the follow-up report is due.
- 2.5.7 All columns against this item were empty. These will be updated when the outcome of Phases 2 and 3 are complete.

It was **RESOLVED** that the contents of the progress Report and Strategy Document be noted.

10. **FINANCE**

i) Investment Performance Update

Members had before them the Investment Performance Update report for April 2010, copy having being issued.

Councillor Dr P Skolar informed the meeting that the FTSE had dropped c3% that day and the value of the Council's investments was now likely to be below £4m.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Investment Performance Report be noted.

ii) Monthly List of Payments

Members had before them the List of Payments, copy having being issued.

It was **RESOLVED** that the reports be received and noted.

11. **2009-10 ACCOUNTS**

The Accountant introduced the paper. She pointed out that the FRS17 report covering pensions was no longer necessary as this had been superseded by the new requirements of FRSSE. However, a pension note will appear in the accounts presented to Full Council on 15 June. The Accountant was congratulated on the accounts production which would be undertaken in-house rather than contracting out the exercise as in previous years. This will generate savings to the Council of c£4k next year. Councillor I Reissmann stated that the Council's accounts had come on a long way in the past few years and were now in much better shape.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

the FS&M Committee notes the accounts and recommends them for approval by Full Council on 15th June, subject to:

- a) the amendment of the pension fund note
- b) inclusion of the actual market value of the investment properties once obtained
- c) any other amendments to the wording of the Annual Report or other parts of the accounts as specified at this FSM meeting.

12. **ISSUES ARISING FROM THE INTERIM AUDIT INTO THE 2009-10 ACCOUNTS**

The meeting considered the report and the suggested responses to the recommendations. Members were content with the wording.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the FS&M Committee

notes the contents of the report and approves HTC's responses, and

agrees to a de minimis of £250 for fixed assets to be capitalised. (this will require disclosure in the Statement of Accounting Policies in the full set of accounts.)

13. **INTERNAL AUDIT – FINAL REPORT 2009-10**

The meeting noted the report and the final Internal Audit Report from Auditing Solutions.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

the Committee notes the content of the Internal Audit Report.

14. **LTP3**

Councillor A Follett explained the latest development with regard to LTP3. HTC would be responding to OCC's questionnaire regarding the various scenarios. Councillor A Follett has already completed the form and was looking to Members to agree his answers. The response is due back with OCC by 20 June.

The personal details at the front of the form would not be completed as they were designed for individuals rather than organisations. It was agreed that a responses should be given to all 4 items (Oxford, Larger Towns, Smaller Towns and Rural Oxfordshire). Agreed responses were as follows:

Oxford: Scenario B – Promoting Transport Choice
Larger Towns: Scenario B – Promoting Transport Choice
Smaller Towns: Scenario B – Promoting Transport Choice

Question 3b (For your chosen scenario, are there any types of scheme that you would wish to be added) should also be completed with the following:

- Park & Ride
- Park & Walk
- Improved cycle paths
- Promoting lower emissions
- Improving access to public transport (information and integration)
- Removal of inappropriate traffic (e.g. HGVs)

Rural Oxfordshire: Scenario C - Promoting Transport Choice

Question 5 (General) should make reference to the following:

- Achieving lower emissions
- Air quality in smaller towns
- Better cross country transport links
- Electric transport
- Difficulty of finding the relevant documents on the OCC website.

Councillor I Reissmann re-iterated that reducing carbon emissions from transport should be the highest priority. Current emissions, in some parts of the town, are above the legal limits and if it were not for the EU derogation, then OCC would be liable for resulting fines.

Councillor A Follett would find the appropriate form of words to encompass the views of the meeting and complete the form accordingly.

Action: Councillor A Follett and the Committee Administrator.

15. **DISPLAY ENERGY CERTIFICATE**

Councillor Mrs G Dodds said she was fascinated that the Town Hall had no roof insulation and insulating the space would produce a sizable energy saving very quickly. Roof access was good and should not, therefore, cause any issues.

Councillor S Smith cautioned against making the building too airtight as this could increase the humidity levels and be detrimental to the fabric of the building. He was also aware of upcoming regulatory changes in the heating and ventilation industry and advised that any new equipment (inc electrical) must meet EU standards. In addition, he felt that the introduction of energy saving initiatives should have their overall effects evaluated. For example, lowering the water temperature in the boiler may increase the chance of Legionella.

Councillor S Smith's expertise was seen to be extremely useful and he was asked to participate in the process of implementing some of the consultant's recommendations.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

Councillors authorise the Town Clerk (with the assistance of the Town Sergeant) to gain quotes for the items listed as having a high impact within the short payback time. A report should then be submitted to the appropriate FS&M Committee Meeting recommending which items can be accommodated within the existing maintenance budget. In addition, those which are deemed to be essential but for which there is no allocation, a proposal as to where compensating savings can be achieved;

the Town Clerk examines all high impact items (with longer pay back times) and puts forward a recommendation as to which should be progressed. In addition, and with the assistance of the Accountant, ensure that a system is put in place to see that budgets in future years are not constructed without reference to the findings of the DEC Advisory report;

Councillor S Smith will provide technical advice to the Town Clerk when seeking quotes to ensure that known regulatory/legislative changes are complied with; and
the Town Clerk presents another report to the next FS&M which outlines exactly what signing up to the 10:10 campaign will entail.

Councillor Mrs G Dodds left the meeting at 8.45.

16. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COUNCIL MEETINGS**

The meeting noted the contents of the Town Clerk's report. Although the report suggested the session be extended to 15 minutes, it was generally felt that 10 minutes was sufficient but this could be extended, at the Chairman's discretion, should it be felt appropriate.

Councillor I Reissmann asked if there was an order of preference of those who wanted to ask questions. Committee agreed this should be residents, house owners, businesses and then non-residents.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

the public participation scheme should continue; the session lasting no longer than 10 minutes (but capable of being extended at the Chairman's discretion) and each speaker to be limited to 2 to 3 minutes.

17. **TOWN MAYOR'S CADET**

This paper had been produced at the request of the Mayor who explained that there were currently 3 cadet forces in the town (army, sea and air). A Mayor's cadet had been a feature in other towns and appears to work well.

However, the meeting felt that not all future Mayors would wish to have a cadet and therefore it should not be compulsory but left to the individual concerned.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

that the Council adopts the custom of appointing a Mayor's Cadet (if requested by the Mayor) and authorises the Clerk to incur expenditure for the purposes of providing label badges.

18. **HENLEY RUGBY CLUB**

The Town Clerk explained that the report being considered by Committee was as a result of a written request for a loan having been received from the Rugby Club. The report outlined the implications for making this award including the drawing down from investments and the precedent that this could set for future Councils to adhere to.

Councillor Mrs J Bland believed that the Club should have made the appropriate provision early for the refurbishment and ringfenced the amount as appropriate.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

the loan application from the Henley Rugby Club is refused.

19. **NORTHFIELD END HIGHWAY**

Councillor A Follett stated that this item was not the opportunity to re-state all the arguments that had been put forward at previous committee meetings and Full Council.

Councillor I Reissmann asked if the Town Clerk had seen the rest of the Conclusions document (rather than just chapter 11). He confirmed he had not.

Action: Town Clerk to write to OCC and ask for a copy of the entire document. If it was considered confidential then the Council would maintain its status with an embargo until the public publication date.

Councillor I Reissmann also pointed out that para 11.7 "If anyone asserts that land which has been found not to be highway is highway, the burden of proof is on him/her" was not legally correct. He asked the Town Clerk to write to Peter Clark – OCC pointing this out.

Action: Town Clerk

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the letter from Kevin Haynes OCC be noted.

20. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

It was moved by the Chairman and **RESOLVED**

that the public and the press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as matters which were about to be discussed were considered to be confidential.

**MINUTES OF THE CONFIDENTIAL SESSION OF THE MEETING OF
THE FINANCE STRATEGY & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON
25 MAY 2010.**

21. **CONFIDENTIAL**

i) LEGAL UPDATE

The Committee received and noted the report on the outstanding legal issues.

Arising from the report:

Bath Site

The Town Clerk was instructed to advise Rod Eyot Parking Limited that confirmation was required by the end of June that the Lesters would be included in the new agreement. If this was not the case, then the Council would not proceed with the lease and the situation of annual licences would be re-instated.

Action: Town Clerk

AFC Henley/Henley Hockey Club

This issue has now been completed and can be removed from the update in future.

Greencroft Allotments

The Town Clerk had met the owner of the house next to the allotments and also visited the site. He noted that there was difficulty deciphering the border between both areas of land. Councillor I Reissmann offered to visit the site with the Town Clerk to examine the problem. The possibility of licensing the area in question would be pursued.

Stepping Stones

The Town Clerk will meet with Clare Bonham-Carter to agree the level of rent for the new lease, the apportionment of utilities and consumables.

36 Market Place

The Committee had already agreed that there was no need to sell the property at this current time but it was a subject that should be reviewed by the VFM Committee. As the property company was prepared to make an offer on the property, the Committee believed that they should be invited to as a benchmark of its current value.

Action: Town Clerk to write to the property company stating that although HTC has not made a decision to sell the property, it would be interested to see the company's offer.

ii) EXCLUSIVELY LADIES

The Town Clerk updated the meeting with the events that had taken place in the previous week. Exclusively Ladies went into administration on 13 May. There are three under-tenants at the property (without the knowledge or permission of the Council) including a hairdresser, beautician and a physical trainer. The Administrator had received a number of expressions of interest and was actively trying to find a buyer for the business.

The Company has not paid the last quarters rent for the lease and if this was not settled within 14 days, the amount will be deducted from their deposit held in the Council's account.

The Company that runs HTC's sports centre (Nexus) is also interested in taking over the lease for leisure based activities and would be happy to continue with the current sub-tenants (although this would need to be regularised via the lease).

The Town Clerk stated that he had been heavily involved with negotiations between Nexus and the Administrator but had not been able to refer the matter to the legal sub-committee as it had not (at that stage) been constituted. Following this FS&M meeting, the Legal group stood ready to provide any necessary assistance.

The meeting was appreciative of the Town Clerk's efforts and the amount of work that had been carried out in such a short time-scale.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that

the Town Clerk's actions to date be endorsed by the Committee and that he continues to negotiate with the Administrator and Nexus to achieve a smooth handover of the premises as soon as the Exclusively Ladies business is wound up;

the resulting legal documents (tenancy at will and the lease) are ratified by Full Council; and

The Legal Group should provided assistance when requested.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Chairman
26.5.10