

Present: The Mayor, Councillor S Gawrysiak
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor M Akehurst
Councillor W Hamilton
Councillor Miss L Hillier
Councillor Miss K Hinton (substituting for Cllr Mrs P Phillips)
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor I Reissmann
Councillor Mrs J Wood

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

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Mayor called for nominations.

It was proposed by Councillor S Gawrysiak and seconded by Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin that Councillor I Reissmann be elected.

It was proposed by Councillor W Hamilton and seconded by Councillor Nimmo-Smith that Councillor Miss L Hillier be elected.

Councillor S Gawrysiak made a brief statement in support of his proposal and Councillor W Hamilton also spoke in support of his proposed candidate.

There being no other nominations, and following a vote (including two abstentions), it was **RESOLVED**

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

Councillor I Reissmann took the chair.

2. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Councillor I Reissmann called for nominations.

It was proposed by Councillor D Nimmo-Smith and seconded by Councillor Miss L Hillier that Councillor W Hamilton be elected.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs J Wood and seconded by Councillor Miss K Hinton that Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin be elected.

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

that Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin 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. No amendments were suggested.

It was RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Finance Strategy and Management Committee be received and re-adopted.

4. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs P Phillips.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF WORKING PARTIES, THE MEMBERSHIP THEREOF AND THEIR TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Financial Planning & Scrutiny Group

The Town Clerk confirmed that this and the Legal Group were not sub-committees. As such, there was no public involvement and in the case of the Legal Group, the subjects discussed were of a confidential nature and would not be suitable for open session.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) were examined and it was suggested that the word 'scrutiny' should be added to the first line of section 4 to read "...acts in an advisory and scrutiny capacity only ..." An updated version of the ToR is attached to this minute.

Councillors were asked for names to be put forward to form the 2013 membership. Seven councillors volunteered and although the ToR only required five, none were prepared to withdraw their names. As a consequence, it was agreed to amend the ToR to reflect the enlarged membership. The resulting quorum size would also be increased from 3 to 4 . An updated version of the ToR is attached to these minutes.

It was RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Financial Planning & Scrutiny Group be received and re-adopted for 2013-14 with the above amendments.

It was RESOLVED that the 2013-14 membership of the Financial Planning & Scrutiny Group would comprise:

**Councillor M Akehurst
Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor W Hamilton
Councillor Miss L Hillier
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor I Reissmann
Councillor J Wood**

Legal Group

Councillors received and considered the Terms of Reference for the Legal Group. It was agreed that the ToR should remain unchanged (copy attached).

It was RESOLVED that the terms of reference for the Legal Group be received and re-adopted for 2013-14.

It was RESOLVED that the membership of the Legal Group would comprise:

**Councillor M Akehurst
Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor Miss L Hillier
Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor Reissmann**

7. **APPOINTMENT OF AD HOC WORKING GROUPS AND THE MEMBERSHIP THEREOF**

IT Review Group

This Group had a number of meetings in 2012 whilst the Council's new website was being developed. However, with its successful introduction there had been no further need to convene the Group. It was agreed that the Group be put in abeyance for the time being. However, should Phase 3 (introduction of an electronic filing system) become a reality then an IT Group would be appointed.

The Town Clerk and the HTC Accountant were asked to produce a paper outlining the progress to date and what could be realistically achieved over the next couple of years.

It was RESOLVED that the IT Review Group be put in abeyance.

8. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

Mrs G Dodds (Grey Road)

Mrs Dodds said she was pleased to see that OCC had written to the residents affected in Bell Street concerning the parking arrangement following the outcome of the Public Inquiry and also asked what would be happening to the green triangle area.

The Chairman confirmed that parallel parking had now been instituted. The Green area belonged to Chesterton but he was keen to see it maintained and work needed to be done to make more of the whole area as a community asset.

9. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 23 April 2013 were received, approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

10. **PROGRESS REPORT**

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

Bell Street

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith confirmed that OCC would be carrying out a parking review this month. He also reported that he had been contacted by residents on the Sydney House side concerning the overgrown vegetation. The land is designated as highway and therefore under OCC control but it is maintained by HTC under an existing agreement between the two Councils. The Chairman asked Cllr Nimmo-Smith (as an OCC Councillor) to raise the issue of Sydney House as a matter of urgency with OCC and report back on progress to date. Potential encroachment of land also needs to be considered as is the case with areas of the Fairmile.

It was agreed that the Progress Report should have a separate entry for Sydney House and independently reported from the Bell Street parking issue.

11. **FINANCE**

i) **Management Accounts**

There was some disquiet concerning the cost (£2,700) of the large bench at Red Lion Lawn. It was confirmed that the quote received was of this magnitude.

It was RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

Post meeting note: The cost was in line with that of the Jubilee bench, and was high because of the specialist work involved. The bench is long, curved and was custom built, and the refurbishment involved taking it apart and putting it back together. Councillors had been made aware of the estimated cost of £3,000 at the FSM meeting on 18 December 2012 under agenda item 8 'Planned Maintenance program 2013-14'. The accompanying schedule to that report indicated costs for 2012-13 as well as those planned for 2013-14. The 2012-13 costs for Red Lion Lawn clearly indicates the cost of the large bench. The over-spend on the Red Lion Lawn in 2012-13 was compensated for by under-spend in other areas.

ii) **Investment Performance**

The Committee was pleased to note that investment portfolio had now reached £4.6m and growth had out-performed the stock market. The Investec returns were particularly impressive.

It was RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

iii) List of payments

A comment was made concerning the cost of printer cartridges. However, the Accountant explained it was for the large colour printer and comparable prices were checked before orders placed.

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

12. EARMARKED RESERVES

The Chairman stated that the report being considered was clear and self-explanatory. The content was agreed but there were two references to 'Britain in Bloom' which needed to be re-titled 'Henley in Bloom'.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that approval is given to carry forward earmarked reserves of £78,273 (as at 31st March 2013).

13. 2012-13 ACCOUNTS

The Chairman expressed his thanks (and that of the Committee) to the HTC Accountant, and all those involved in the production of the accounts, for all their hard work. It was pleasing to see that the accounts had not been qualified in any way.

An amendment was agreed to Page 4. The bullet point "Enhancements at Makins and Freemans Recreation Grounds" should be replaced with "Recreational improvements". There were a small number of typos in the document where '2012' had been used instead of '2013'. The Accountant will make the necessary amendments.

A question was raised concerning the reduction in the long-term debtors figures. It was explained that this was the result of loans being repaid. The Trade debtors figure was being repaid as expected.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that

the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2013 are approved (subject to the above changes).

the Annual Return (pages 2 and 3) is approved

14. INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The Committee was pleased (and thanks were expressed to the District Council) that funds were being made available for capital projects. The matched funds would include some items from the Action Plan and as such would be considered by the Town & Community Committee.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that

Councillors authorise the Town Clerk and Accountant to apply for funding of 50% towards the following projects:

replacement Christmas lights, planters at Northfield End and refurbishment of the Frank Crisp memorial stone:

further quotes are obtained regarding the cost of refurbishing and repainting the street furniture, but that an application for match funding is submitted as soon as a quote has been chosen;

applications for funds towards the Welcome to Henley signs and the other town signage projects be given due consideration at the relevant Committees;

if an unspent balance from the possible total funding of £18,750 remains, that other projects are considered on a case by case basis, and giving due consideration to the Council's 2013-14 budget constraints;

eligible projects for 2014-15 be give due consideration in the budget setting process.

15. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Town Clerk introduced his paper which had been produced after much research and the Chairman thanked him for his thoroughness and the detail produced. The paper was split into two sections dealing with the warding arrangements within the town and secondly the extent of the parish boundary.

There was a lot of discussion concerning the benefits of the current north/south arrangement as opposed to the proposal to create four named wards. Although many could see the benefits of having four distinct wards which would encourage a sense of identity and community, it was felt that there was not a sufficient desire for change especially as very few problems had been experienced with the two ward system.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the existing arrangement of having a north and south ward returning 8 councillors in each should be retained.

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin left the meeting at 8.50.

The second part of the report covered the parish boundary as a whole. It was agreed that it was sensible to redraw the boundary along demographic and geographic lines in place of the rather arbitrary boundary that exists now. However, it was recognised that this could be a sensitive issue as Harpsden parish would be affected. Although the timing of the review was not ideal, as on-going discussions are taking place concerning the Neighbourhood Plan, it was eminently logical to consider redrafting the parish boundary as this opportunity would not be forthcoming for another ten years.

Moreover, since it was likely that some of the proposed new housing development, a requirement of the Core Strategy, could be built on the edge of Henley which in turn would have an impact on the town's infrastructure because traffic, education and GP needs would all be directed towards the town rather than to the village of Harpsden, a change in the parish boundary to incorporate this new development should be pursued. It was noted that the next Full Council would be the final chance to contribute to the consultation.

Members considered that it was unnatural for the present boundary to cut through Gillotts Field but exclude Gillotts School and the Sports Centre in Henley. Any housing development on Highlands Farm would be better placed within the town boundary rather than the rural parish of Harpsden who would be more likely to resist the imposition of housing. The proposed boundary change was supported although it was felt that Harpsden Parish Council should be informed of the town council's current thinking.

It was RESOLVED that Councillors Akehurst and Hamilton take the opportunity to speak to Harpsden parish on the proposed changes to make them aware of Henley's proposal and a verbal report could be given on the outcome to Full Council on 25 June; and

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that representations are made to SODC proposing the Henley parish boundary is redefined to include those areas on the map attached to these minutes.

16. **ESTATE INSPECTIONS**

There was a general feeling that estate inspections still had some value. Councillors had allocated 'patches' which they had become familiar with and in the main wished to carry on with the exercise. Although the risk of adverse possession had largely receded, there was still a need to regularly review the estate. There was concern expressed about the amount of officer time that was absorbed (both Parks and administrative). It was agreed that the Parks Manager only needed to accompany new Councillors on their first inspection, and after this date they would carry out inspections on their own. It was also agreed that all the inspections should be carried out during a specific time window to avoid the necessity for Councillors to be reminded at various times throughout the year.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the estate inspections continue to be scheduled once a year during a specific period but without the attendance of the Parks Manager.

17. **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 4 JUNE 2013.

18. **CONFIDENTIAL**

i) **LEGAL UPDATE**

First Chapel

This item had been completed and would be removed from future updates.

Henley Rugby Club – Telecommunications Mast

There had not been any new information on this issue and it was agreed that the item is removed from the update until there is some progress.

The Kiosk, Mill Meadows

A valuation of the site has been requested.

CAB

The meeting reviewed the proposed wording of the side letter and agreed the content with the correction of one typo.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the following be included in the side letter to the Licence to assign:

The Assignee further covenants with the Landlord that while the Property remains vested in the Assignee:

3.3.1 the Property will be used first and foremost as a Citizens Advice Bureau and for related counseling services for Henley and district's residents and not as a centralised call centre for handling all CAB enquiries from across the South Oxfordshire/Vale District;

3.3.2 the Landlord shall be entitled to appoint from time to time a representative (with, as a minimum, observer status) to serve on the Executive Committee of the Assignee;

3.3.3 the Assignee will ensure that at all times one member of its Executive Committee is a resident of the area previously served by Henley CAB; and

3.3.4 that although the Assignee may vary the hours during which the Property is open to members of the public it will not reduce the total number of hours in each week for which the Property is open and used for the Required Use (as defined in the Lease).

ii) **BATH SITE**

There was a lot of discussion concerning the site, its value (in terms of the rent generated) and whether it should remain a car park for the licence holders from Rod Eyot. The Town Clerk confirmed that he was still awaiting some further information from Simmons on the subject. Although a Rod Eyot resident had expressed an interest in buying the site, he was advised it was not for sale.

However, the Town Clerk was tasked with speaking with the resident to gauge his feelings on other potential options.

It was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be given delegated powers to negotiate with the resident concerning a possible lease which would need to be put in place by April 2014.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that should there be no interest from the resident then the current licence holders be offered new 5 year parking licences, the rent for which would be increased annually by rpi.

iii) FAIRGROUND RIDES AT MILL MEADOWS

The Town Clerk advised that the meeting with the Jones family had been very productive and they were keen to have their enterprise put on a separate legal footing. Although there was no objection to the rides being on Mill Meadows, there was some concern that the equipment was in need of re-painting. As soon as the necessary assurances regarding the refurbishment had been received then the details of the licence could be re-submitted to FS&M for approval.

It was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk speaks to Mr R Jones concerning the repainting of the fairground rides.

iv) LAND AT DEANFIELD ROAD

The meeting examined a letter from the prospective house owner and the reasons for him seeking a Tenancy at Will which would provide some additional protection against the land bordering the garden being developed. There were no objections raised to the request.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that

A new Tenancy at Will is created which will come into effect once completion on the house takes place. The new owners to meet the Council's proper legal costs.

Once the house purchase has gone through, the Council to obtain a market valuation for the site (at Mr & Mrs Pearson's expense) and depending on the outcome, a decision is taken by FS&M on whether a sale should proceed. The Council may also consider at that time offering the land adjoining 95 and 99 to the current respective householders.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm.

Chairman
5.6.13

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND SCRUTINY (FPS) GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Membership

The Group shall consist of 7 Councillors plus 3 Officers. The nominated Officers are Town Clerk, Accountant and the Finance Strategy & Management (FS&M) Committee Administrator.

2. Quorum

Shall be at least 4 Councillors.

3. Chairman

The Chairman of the FPS group shall be elected at the first meeting of the Group.

4. Reporting

The Group is appointed by the FS&M Committee and acts in an advisory and scrutiny capacity only with the Group submitting reports and recommendations to the FS&M Committee. On matters that require further research, for example requesting a more detailed report or seeking clarification from third parties on a specific item, then the Group shall have a delegated power to act.

5. Remit

The Working Group is set up:

- To review the Council's use of its physical and financial assets to ensure that it is securing value for money, including reduction of the Council's cost base.
- To consider changes to the Council's current use of its physical and financial assets in order to improve the Council's return.
- To set clear parameters and criteria for the different use of the Council's assets i.e. community, investment, operational and the expected returns from each.
- To focus on improvements which generate proportionately significantly greater net returns.
- To optimise its income and secure value for money from its cost base with a view to setting an annually balanced budget without drawing on reserves.
- To secure best value from the Council's assets, from its purchasing power.
- To generate ideas and priorities for investigation (the actual work in developing these ideas will be undertaken by the appropriate Standing Committee or others).
- As part of the budget setting process, to give a steer to the Standing Committees of the level of increases in fees & charges or overall budget.

6. Frequency of meetings

The Group will meet 4 times a year. The timings of the meetings to satisfy the budget timetable requirements.

LEGAL GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2013-14

7. Membership

The Group shall consist of 6 Councillors plus 2 Officers. The nominated Officers are Town Clerk and the Finance Strategy & Management (FS&M) Committee Administrator.

8. Quorum

Shall be at least 3 Councillors.

9. Chairman

The Chairman of the Legal group shall be the Chairman of the FS&M Committee unless s(he) is absent in which case the Councillors present shall appoint a Chairman for the meeting.

10. Reporting

The Group is appointed by the FS&M Committee and acts in an advisory capacity only with the Group submitting reports and recommendations to the FS&M Committee. On matters that require further research, for example requesting a more detailed report or seeking clarification from third parties on a specific item, then the Group shall have a delegated power to act.

11. Remit

The Working Group is set up:

- To consider all cases where litigation may arise relating to the Council's assets and staff.
- To consider all draft legal contracts and conveyancing transactions.
- To secure best value from the legal services provided by the Council's appointed solicitors.

