

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

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

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The Deputy Mayor called for nominations.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs P Phillips and seconded by Councillor M Akehurst that Councillor I Reissmann be elected.

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

Councillor W Hamilton made a brief statement in support of his nomination.

There being no other nominations, and following a vote, 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 Mrs P Phillips and seconded by Councillor Mrs J Wood that Councillor M Akehurst be elected.

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

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

that Councillor M Akehurst 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 agreed that reference need to be made to the Investment Managers and an extra bullet point should be included to reflect the requirement.

It was RESOLVED that the terms of reference for the Finance Strategy and Management Committee be received and re-adopted for 2012-13 with the addition of item xiii):

The Committee will receive written reports from the Fund Managers every six months plus an annual presentation.

4. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for an expected late arrival were received from The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith:

Min 10 – Progress Report (Northfield End) – personal (OCC Councillor)

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

Financial Planning & Scrutiny Group

This Group is the re-named Value for Money and Resources Group. It was agreed that the role of the Chair would not automatically fall to the FS&M Chair but could be decided at the first meeting of the FPS Group. It was also felt that the frequency of the meetings should also be included in the ToR.

It was RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference for the Financial Planning & Scrutiny Group be received and re-adopted for 2012-13 with the following amendments:

- **The Chairman of the FPS Group shall be elected at the first meeting of the Group.**
 - **The FPS Group shall meet at least 4 times a year (the timing of which to satisfy the budget timetable requirements).**
- (An updated copy of the ToR is attached.)**

It was RESOLVED that the 2012-13 membership of the Financial Planning & Scrutiny Group would comprise:

Councillor M Akehurst
Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor W Hamilton
Councillor Miss L Hillier
Councillor I Reissmann

Legal Group

Councillors received and considered the Terms of Reference for the Legal Group. It was agreed that the ToR should remain unchanged. The Chairman pointed out that as one of the serving Councillors was a solicitor (retired) it would be advantageous if he was a member of the Group. Councillor D Clenshaw had been approached on the matter and had indicated his willingness to join.

It was RESOLVED that the terms of reference for the Legal Group be received and re-adopted for 2012-13 and

that the membership of the Legal Group would comprise:

Councillor M Akehurst
Councillor D Clenshaw
Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor Miss L Hillier
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor I Reissmann

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

IT Review Group

Although, with the launch of the new website, the work of the Group had effectively ended, it was felt that this Group should remain in existence. It was considered highly probable that further IT issues would arise in the future which this Group could address.

It was RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference of the IT Working Group be accepted and the 2012-13 membership of would comprise:

Councillor M Akehurst
Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor Ms L Meachin
Councillor D Nimmo-Smith
Councillor I Reissmann

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There were no questions from the public.

9. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 24 April 2012 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:

Northfield End – Amenity Area

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that he had chased Kevin Haines for the 'options list' following the site visit at the start of the year. Kevin Haines had asked David Tole to respond. A Member advised that OCC had been informed of the issue of properties being marketed with parking spaces as part of their sale details. The Town Clerk was asked to e-mail OCC to ask for a progress report on the outstanding issues.

Action: Committee Administrator

Northfield End – Stopping Up Order

The meeting was advised that no date had yet been set for the Public Enquiry. A Member referred to the two letters attached to the agenda (HTC to Mr Foxall and HTC to Kevin Haines both dated 30 April). He had an issue to raise concerning the letters which he felt could only be discussed in the confidential part of the meeting. As he was unable to elucidate in the public session,

it was RESOLVED that discussion on this item be moved to the confidential section.

IT Website Review

The Town Clerk confirmed that all the office staff had received their training from the developers, InTouch, and can now load documents (agenda, minutes, reports etc) onto the website. The HTC Accountant was congratulated on her hard work and dedication to the project.

Energy Reduction

The Town Clerk confirmed that he would be meeting a contractor next week concerning the possible installation of solar panels (photovoltaic (PV) cells) on the Town Hall roof. Henley in Transition (HiT) has given the Clerk names of alternative contractors so that competing bids could be obtained when and if necessary. A Member reminded the Clerk that it may be useful to contact Brian Brent who was involved in the PV installation on St Mary's Church roof to discuss how that project was successfully implemented. There was also a general discussion on the likelihood of grants still being available. The payback period could not be determined at this stage and there was the likelihood that this project may not see any profit at all. A report would be presented to FS&M when further details are known and there is substantive information to report.

11. **FINANCE**

i) Budget Monitoring

The meeting examined the management accounts. A Member queried the fact that the Capex report contained £15k for the Youth Shelter and had done for a number of years. The Chairman explained that no final decision on the Shelter had been made. Although the money had been identified, this did not equate to a commitment but it was prudent that the funds were earmarked should the project go ahead.

It was RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

ii) Investment Performance

There was no material comment on the investment update.

It was RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

iii) List of payments

Two queries were raised on the payment listings:

- a) £500 paid to the Henley Partnership. The Town Clerk confirmed that this was in fact a subscription that the Council pays as a local authority (and covers the Council as a corporate body).
- b) £2,563 electricity bill for the pavilion. The Accountant explained that consumption was actually metered via sub meters and the appropriate amounts recharged to both the nursery and bowls club.

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

12. **EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Accountant introduced her report which she believed was self explanatory. It detailed the provisions made for various items which would be carried forward to cover future expenditure. In answer to a Member's question, she confirmed that provision for the astro pitch replacement would be reflected in the 2012-13 earmarked reserves. She also confirmed that Councillors expenses do appear on the HTC website. The Chairman thanked the Accountant for her work on this item and her clear and concise report.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the carry forward of an earmarked reserve of £70,179 as at 31 March 2012 is approved.

13. **APPROVAL OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ANNUAL RETURN FIGURES**

The accountant explained that the figures on pages 5 and 6 of the unaudited financial statements were drawn from the figures included in the Month 13 management accounts already considered. The financial statements are not externally audited but they will be reviewed by the external auditors for compatibility with the figures in the Annual Return. The financial statements are presented to give Councillors and members of the public fuller and more meaningful information, whilst falling short of the excessive statutory obligations under the former FRSSE regime. These financial statements are not statutory, but having been prepared it is a requirement that they are approved at Full Council. Copies of sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return were also presented,

with section 1 including the figures that are statutorily required to be prepared and audited. The figures for receipts are required to include all receipts, including sales proceeds of investments and loan repayments, and the payments figure must include the cost of investments and fixed assets purchased in the year. The table on page 3 of the unaudited financial statements details how the two reconcile.

It was noted that both documents have already been checked by the internal auditor and will be with the external auditors, BDO, shortly. The unaudited financial statements and annual return will be attached to the website following the external auditors' approval.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

the unaudited financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2012 be presented to Full Council on 12 June 2012, for approval subject to confirmation of the value of the investment properties.

the Annual Return sections 1 and 2, be presented to Full Council on 12 June 2012 for approval.

The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin joined the meeting at 8.30.

14. **SWISS FARM/MARLOW ROAD CROSSING**

This item had been referred to FS&M by the Town & Community Committee (T&C) to seek approval of the proposed expenditure. The matter had been discussed extensively at T&C, following a recommendation from the Traffic Advisory Committee, and although there was no accident history in that area, it was felt that the crossing would be an effective preventative measure. The choice of a pelican crossing was felt to be the most cost effective solution. The Town Clerk explained that OCC would be driving this project and deal with all the elements such as public consultation, tendering, organisation etc. The Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) that will be installed at the site while the consultation takes place could be moved elsewhere at a later date and Members were asked to consider another suitable site. It was unlikely that the crossing would be in place before 2013-14. £25k of s106 money had been earmarked by OCC towards this project and HTC would provide additional funding. It was felt that consideration should be given to earmarking funds for future traffic calming measures as there were other roads in the Town that would benefit.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

the Committee earmark up to £30k of the Road Safety budget for the provision of a pelican crossing at Swiss Farm/Marlow Road. However, the £25k s106 funds should be used first with the balance (up to £30k) then being funded by HTC.

15. **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 22 MAY 2012.

16. **CONFIDENTIAL**

i) LEGAL UPDATE

Henley Town Football Club

The Town Clerk reported that he had spoken to Geoff Biggs (HTFC) who had advised that a meeting was to be held on 22 May to discuss the Club's situation. He did intimate that the Club would still be looking for an extension to their lease which is due to expire in September. The Chairman asked the Town Clerk to keep in close contact with the Club and any emerging organisation/structure.

Makins Recreation Ground

The initiative to dedicate part of the site as a Queen Elizabeth II Field had turned in to an involved and legally complex case. The meeting questioned whether this initiative should be progressed as the Ground was already protected against possible future development. A Member questioned what the benefits were identified by Fields in Trust. As the information was not readily to hand, it was agreed that the Town Clerk present a further report to the next FS&M giving the appropriate information so that an informed decision could be made as to whether the matter should be progressed or abandoned.

Action: Town Clerk/R&A Committee Administrator

Bath Site

It was noted that the parking licences would expire in 2013 and the Council would need to consider the future of the site at that date. In advance of this, it was agreed that a valuation be sought to determine its current value as a licenced car park site, if sold for potential development and the likely rental value if leased.

Action: FS&M Committee Administrator.

It was RESOLVED that the legal update be noted.

ii) PROVISION OF LEGAL SERVICES

The Town Clerk reported that although there had been some OCC resource difficulties at the start of the year, the service now seemed to be working extremely well. The Chairman requested that the Clerk continues to monitor the service and should there be any further difficulties then these are addressed at the earliest opportunity.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

OCC continue to provide the Council's legal services and that HTC sign up to their 2012-13 SLA. (Should there be any future disruption or resource issue that affect the quality of that service then it should be immediately reported to the FS&M Committee.)

iii) HENLEY VOLUNTEER BUREAU (HVB)

The Committee was very supportive of the work of the HVB and were fully in agreement that their lease be renewed.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

A new lease is granted from 1 January 2013 with an expiry date of 31 December 2024.

Rent to remain at £520/pa (with a CPI increase every 5 years)

The Council will bear its own legal costs in connection with the new lease.

Henley Volunteer Bureau to meet its own legal costs but if they exceed £500 then they are invited to apply for a grant to cover the additional amount. The application to be heard at the February 2013 FS&M meeting and will receive the approval of Councillors.

iv) AFC HENLEY

A previous meeting of FS&M had been advised that the Club were looking to vary their lease to remove clauses that could potentially prohibit outside funding. The Deed of Variation would be drawn up by the Club's solicitor (Mercers) and all amendments cleared by Blandy & Blandy.

It was RESOLVED that the Council notes the proposed change to AFC Henley's lease.

v) LEAVER ROAD

The Town Clerk confirmed that he had now met with all three couples that were affected by the equity share issue.

It was RESOLVED that the note of the meeting with the householder be received and noted.

17. NORTHFIELD END

It was resolved (at Min no. 10) that this item be moved into the Confidential section at a Member's request. The Member wanted to discuss the strategy to be adopted by the Council on this issue. However, it was agreed that there were insufficient grounds for excluding the public and the press to enable the Committee to consider this item in the Confidential session; further discussion would not be prejudicial to the public interest. In addition, the Town Clerk pointed out that this item was not on the agenda and as such could not be discussed. The Committee agreed that no further decision could therefore be made for the reasons set out above.

At this point the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.55pm.

Chairman
23.5.12

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND SCRUTINY (FPS) GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Membership

The Group shall consist of 5 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 3 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 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 at least 4 times a year. The timings of the meetings to satisfy the budget timetable requirements.