

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

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

19. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Miss L Hillier for a possible late arrival.

20. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

21. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

No members of the public were in attendance.

22. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management (FS&M) Committee held on 4 June 2013 were received, approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

23. **PROGRESS REPORT**

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

Bell St & Northfield End – Parking & Highway Issues

Councillor D Nimmo-Smith gave the meeting a verbal update of the situation. OCC officers had conducted an 'on the ground parking review' but the report had not yet been finalised but it was hoped that it should be available in time for Full Council on 6 August. He was not aware of the area covered by this review.

He confirmed that he was not aware there had been any legal action initiated as a result of the outcome of the Public Inquiry.

Land outside Sydney House

The issue of possible encroachment is with OCC legal. Councillor D Nimmo-Smith undertook to see if there had been any further developments.

Community Governance Review

The Town Clerk was congratulated on his letter to SODC which clearly set out the Council's views on the town council electoral review which was currently underway.

It was agreed that this item and the item relating to Estate Inspections could now be removed from the Progress Report.

24. **FINANCE**

i) Management Accounts

Resulting from a question concerning licences, the Town Clerk confirmed that the licence for the Henley Brewhouse's outside seating has been prepared and is with the company for signing. The licence for the Red Lion Lawn (valid for 6 months and with a defined area of c20m²) is also waiting final signature. No additional licences had been granted.

The Accountant advised that the drawdown figure on the cashflow statement was to fund the agreed capital projects should a resolution be passed by committee (under delegated powers) or Full Council . It was also confirmed that the entry entitled 'safety measures' was not limited to one project but could cover a number of as yet, undefined schemes. The description had been amended previously to a more generic heading to give greater flexibility.

The budget for weed killing was noted. Councillor D Nimmo-Smith advised that there was a 'locality fund' of c£16k (which did not require match funding) which may be able to assist with a grant towards this expense. The Accountant will liaise with the Councillor to gain further information. It was

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

ii) Investment Performance

Although the graph showed a dip in the value of the assets, it was noted that the FTSE had risen c10% since its production so the situation had improved. It was

RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

iii) List of payments

The list of payments was reviewed. There were no material comments and it was

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

25. **REVIEW OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

a) Corporate Governance

A number of minor comments were made as follows:

- the correct use of the word 'principle' as opposed to 'principal'
- Community focus c). The entry 'Value for Money Working Group' should be amended to read 'Financial Planning & Scrutiny Group'.
- Public Accountability 7th bullet point. This should be expanded to include the fact that agendas and minutes of all the standing committees are available on the website.

b) Financial Regulations

There were no comments on this paper other than to thank the Accountant for her work on this agenda item.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the revised Local Code of Corporate Governance and revised Financial Regulations be accepted subject to the changes set out above.

26. **INTERNAL AUDITOR**

There was a debate concerning the merits of awarding a three year contract to a new set of auditors. It was felt that it would be more sensible to try the new supplier for one year so they could be assessed at the end of the period. Consequently, it was

RESOLVED that SODC Internal Audit Department be awarded an initial one year contract at a cost of £780.

27. **FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

The Accountant updated the meeting with the news that the application to SODC's Infrastructure Fund for matched funding (of £1,302) to purchase Christmas lights had been successful.

It was also noted that a 'Community Investment Fund' was available from SODC this year for capital projects. There was some speculation as to whether this fund could contribute to the refurbishment of the toilets at Mill Meadows. The refurbishment had previously been considered a capital project by HTC but it was suggested that the Mill Meadows Sub-Committee should look more closely at this potential opportunity.

Action: R&A Committee Administrator to add agenda item for Mill Meadows Sub Committee.

It was also noted that OCC offered a £10k Community Fund for community based schemes that in the past had helped with direct funding for NOMAD and Henley Good Neighbours. The Fund is also open to applications from town and parish councils.

It was suggested that the normal HTC grant application form should be amended to encourage applicants to apply for additional sources of funding such as OCC's Community Fund, and other OCC/SODC initiatives.

It was RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that

Council note the existence of the CIF funding opportunities and

the Town Clerk/Accountant are authorised to apply for shared funding towards the projects identified at point 13 in the report: "The main capital projects for which funding application may be sought, and which have been budgeted for 2013-14, are the public toilets at Mill Meadows, the Toddler Play Area at Mill Meadows, Recreational Improvements, Solar Panels on the Town Hall, and Safety Measures".

28. **ENERGY REDUCTION**

The Accountant explained that although the Feed in Tariff (FiT) figures were supplied not all the comparable consumption figures were yet available but initial examination indicates a reduction of approximately 1/3 in consumption. Three main benefits have been realised;

- a reduction in carbon emissions,
- at least £7k reduction in consumption, and
- a c16% return on the initial capital investment.

Overall, the figures were very pleasing and represented good news for the Town as a whole. It was suggested when all the figures were available and had been examined, even greater savings may be apparent.

Councillor Miss L Hillier joined the meeting at 8.10.

The Chairman raised the issue of solar panels on the Town Hall. These were not installed when the other buildings were fitted due to initial objections from English Heritage. He suggested a working group was set up involving Henley in Transition (Malcolm Dodds, Dave McEwen, Dick Fletcher) and two Councillors (possibly Councillors I Reissmann and S Gawrysiak). The main objectives of this group would be

- to further investigate solar panels on the Town Hall, arrange a mock up, and discuss with English Heritage,
- investigate other possible solar panel locations, and
- consider other possible measures (e.g. heat exchange at Mill Meadows) which develop HTC's sustainability.
-

It was confirmed that the Working Group would produce reports on the work undertaken which would be submitted to FS&M for consideration. There would be no HTC officer time devoted to the group.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

the figures to date are noted, and that the Accountant will prepare figures for the Feed In Tariffs and consumption comparisons for the full year to 31 October 2013 for presentation to the FS&M Committee meeting on 3 December 2013, to include the three properties (60+ Club, 357 Reading Road and the changing room at 355 Reading Road).

a working group is set up involving 2 Councillors (I Reissmann and Gawrysiak and three Henley in Transition members to progress sustainability issues which would report to the Finance Strategy & Management Committee.

29. **REVIEW OF POLLING STATIONS**

The Committee was invited to submit their views on the current polling arrangements for Henley and to present alternative venues to the District Council as part of their formal review of polling districts. There was a long debate concerning the current polling stations. It was noted by some that Henley Leisure Centre was in a good position to serve both the north and south ward. However, its legitimacy as a polling station could be brought into question as it was outside the Henley parish boundary and was in fact located in Harpsden parish. Valley Road School had previously been used but this was discontinued as it meant having to close the school for a day which was not popular. Overall, it was felt that the status quo should be maintained so that electors are not having to change their polling stations every time thus causing confusion. However, Councillors should still consider other potential venues for the future such as the Scout hut.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the current polling stations, Town Hall and Henley Leisure Centre (for the north ward) and Trinity Hall and Christchurch Centre (for the south ward) should be retained and SODC advised accordingly.

30. **NALC CONSULTATION PAPER**

The Town Clerk introduced the paper and advised that his main contact was with the county association rather than the national association. However, the Council's views concerning the change in the proposed tax base and the effect on the precept had been channelled through NALC, as had numerous other councils' responses. It was agreed that the spreadsheet supplied with the consultation paper should not be completed at the meeting but should be delegated to the Town Clerk. A copy of the spreadsheet is attached to these minutes and councillors were encouraged to provide input and assistance to the Town Clerk especially in the area of identifying priority areas.

It was RESOLVED that

the consultation paper 'A new Future – developing the Strategy' be noted and

(under delegated powers to the Town Clerk) the Strategic Review Function Assignment Sheet is completed by the Town Clerk with the assistance of the Chairman and any other Councillors for submission by the deadline of 30 August.

31. **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 16 JULY 2013.

32. **CONFIDENTIAL**

i) **LEGAL UPDATE**

AFC Henley & CAB

It was noted that both these items had been completed and it was agreed that both could be removed from the Legal Update.

Kiosk, Mill Meadows

The Town Clerk explained the difficulty finding comparable sites on which to base a valuation. It was accepted that the current rent represented an acceptable level of rent for the Council. The Town Clerk was asked to remind the tenant that the appearance of the building should be maintained to a high order. It was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the new level of rent should be retained at £14,177 with the rent reviews conducted as per lease terms.

The Barn

The meeting reviewed the letter from Simmons and Sons concerning the likely level of rent that could be achieved for the offices and the fact that there had been little or no increase in rents over the period. The Town Clerk confirmed that the lease would be renewed on the same terms (except for the principal rent, service charge and option for a further lease) for a further two years commencing on 1 October 2013. The meeting felt that a side letter should also be sent to the tenant reminding them that the passage way from Millennium Court through the Barn to the car park was open to the public during office hours and that the doors should not be locked. Improved signage to inform the public about the Barn was expected shortly. It was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the current rent figure of £9,500 is used for the new lease.

ii) **FAIRGROUND RIDES**

The meeting reviewed the draft lease and were happy with the content save:

- clause 1.22. The wording was not clear and the solicitor needed to be asked whether the Council had the right to refuse particular rides/the rides were replaced by one unit
- clause 23.1 appeared to be incomplete
- first schedule wording needed to be checked, and
- the exact dimensions of the area should be included.

It was proposed that the Town Clerk resolve the minor outstanding issues and progress to final agreement. It was

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk (under delegated powers) discuss the remaining issues with the Council's solicitor and progress the document to the final stage for signing.

iii) LEGAL GROUP NOTES

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Legal Group was an advisory group only and it was for FS&M to make recommendations to Full Council. Councillors had before them the copy of the notes of the 8 July Legal Group meeting and all the relevant supporting paperwork. The meeting accepted and agreed the advice put forward, concerning both the River and Rowing Museum and the Adventure Playground, by the Group.

River & Rowing Museum (RRM)

Additionally it was recognised that there was insufficient time to refer the matter to Full Council and that the Town Clerk should be charged with taking the matter forward expeditiously. Consequently, it was

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk (under delegated powers) write to the River & Rowing Museum;

- a) **confirming the Council's position and advising them that the remaining trees would be felled within the next month and that the new planting would begin this Autumn. It should be emphasised that the timescales and choice of species were non-negotiable, and**
- b) **stating that, in the spirit of good neighbourly relations, the Council and the RRM discuss the most convenient dates for the work to be carried out (within the time-scale specified above). The letter to promote positive intentions.**

Adventure Playground

There was little discussion on this matter as the Council's position had not changed therefore it was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the subject need not be visited after this time and this is communicated to the resident whose solicitor's letter had been reviewed by the Legal Group.

The meeting closed at 9.30.pm.

Chairman
17.7.13

Horizontal :- whose job Vertical :- the function You may tick more than one box in any row	national staff	chairman and or vice chairmen	exec comm	finance comm	policy comm	larger councils comm	smaller councils comm	national council	county staff	county chairman and or national council reps	county exec / GP board	member town and parish councils	out source to service provider	no need to provide this service	other comments or suggestions
organise national conferences and events															
develop new funding streams															
staff management / development															
define membership of the national association															
appoint new ceo															
produce training publications															
train new / existing clerks															
train councillors															
train county staff															
manage and develop QPS & NTS															
raise local councils profile															
lobby opinion formers															
lobby journalists, media and think tanks															
communicate with LGA Solace and government bodies															
communicate with SLCC															
set national financial budgets															
monitor national finances															
give accounts and audit advice															
carry out public and statutory responsibilities															
provide recruitment / HR advice															
share good practice															
name a function															
name a function															

Has your council experienced any problems regarding NALC services in the last 12 months

Name and Council / County (optional)..... Thank you in anticipation of your help Ken Browse Chairman NALC