

Present: The Deputy Mayor, Councillor S Gawrysiak
Councillor M Akehurst (Vice chair)
Councillor W Hamilton
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 H King – Committee Administrator
Mrs L Jones – HTC Accountant (part)
6 members of the public
1 member of the press

18. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from The Mayor, Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin and Councillor Miss L Hillier.

19. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

It was noted that the information under this agenda item made reference to the old Local Government Act and all Committee agendas would need to be amended in future to reflect the Localism Act 2011.

Under this item the Town Clerk advised the meeting that the new Code of Conduct (which was adopted at the last Full Council on 12 June) outlined Councillors' responsibilities and will be published shortly on the website. He reminded Councillors that he had also provided them with copies of the relevant Guide and Statutory Instrument and requested that every Member familiarised themselves with the contents.

Councillor Mrs J Wood joined the meeting at 7.35.

20. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

Mr Chris Russell (102 Bell Street)

Mr Russell congratulated the Chairman on the draft submission to the Public Inquiry concerning Northfield End. He believed it to be an excellent document and stated that he would write in to the Council with his comments rather than making a statement at the meeting.

21. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 22 May 2012 were received, approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

It was RESOLVED that the order of business be varied in accordance with Standing Orders and that Agenda item 8 (Northfield End) be moved into the Confidential section at the end of the meeting as discussion in open session was not felt to be in the public interest.

22. **PROGRESS REPORT**

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

Northfield End

A Member confirmed that OCC had written to residents informing them of the latest position.

IT Website Review

It was agreed that now this item was complete, it could be removed from the Progress Report.

23. **FINANCE**

i) Budget Monitoring

No comments were made on either the dashboard or the management accounts. It was

RESOLVED that the reports be received and noted.

ii) Investment Performance

The Town Clerk confirmed that the report from the Investment Managers (IM) will be reviewed at the September FS&M meeting. The report for the quarter ending June 2012 should be circulated when received and the IMs asked to update the document if there were material changes in the period July to mid September. It was

RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

iii) List of payments

It was noted that (despite the recent bad weather) the income from parking at Mill Meadows was very encouraging and in fact was better than for the same period the previous year. This was due, in part, to four days of the Regatta falling in to the month of June. It was

RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

24. **BUDGET TIMETABLE**

It was confirmed that the timetable followed the same basic structure as in previous years. The Financial Planning & Scrutiny Group will be examining the budget in detail. (The first meeting of this Group is scheduled for 16 July). It was

RESOLVED that the timetable be adopted.

25. **SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION AT THE TOWN HALL**

The Town Clerk explained the background to the paper and the fact that Henley in Transition had been involved in the initial investigations. A meeting had been held with EcoFusion, an independent company specialising in solar panelling. They had produced a detailed, technical report on which the committee paper had been based. It was confirmed that an installation on the Town Hall would require planning permission and the Town Clerk was asked to progress the matter. It was accepted that the deadline (of 1 August) to receive the higher Feed in Tariff (FiT) would be missed. The Town Clerk was asked to check that the FiT (at 16.8p per KW) was guaranteed in the final signed contact for the entire 25 year period and that any change in legislation would not have a detrimental affect. There was no allocated budget for this capital project and it would need to be financed by drawdown and/or surplus cash reserves. It was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the installation of the solar panels on the Town Hall be progressed to completion.

The report also detailed the possibility of installing panels on both the Pavilion at Mill Meadows and the Over 60s Club. The meeting was concerned that these installations would be visible from street level (unlike those on the Town Hall) and further consideration was needed before any decision could be made. As the tenants of both these buildings were responsible for meeting their own electricity bills, it was noted that the tenants would benefit from the reduction in usage costs, but that the Town Council would also benefit from reduced usage for its portion of the Pavilion, and it would also benefit from the FiTs of both buildings. It was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Town Clerk (with the assistance of the HTC Accountant) produce a further paper for consideration at the September FS&M meeting to cover the possibility of installing panels on the Pavilion, Over 60s Club and other Council buildings. The report should contain detailed proposals, plans/drawings, advice from the planning authority as well as costed options.

The HTC Accountant joined the meeting at 8.15.

26. **ELECTORAL REVIEW**

Continuing concern was expressed at the proposal to reduce the overall number of District Councillors to 36 and as a consequence the number representing Henley to 3. It was felt that 4 remained a minimum number to represent the Town effectively. However, if the reduction went ahead then it was agreed that the Town should be treated as one ward and not split into three. It was

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk (under delegated powers) write to SODC by their deadline of 6 July reiterating the Town Council's original objections to the proposed reductions but confirming that if this were to be the case, the Town should be treated as a single ward. The Town Clerk should also write to the Boundary Commission on the subject and also ask why the Council's previous communications had not warranted a detailed response. It also needed to be pointed out (to both SODC and the Boundary Commission) that, yet again, this matter had to be dealt with under delegated powers therefore denying the Full Council an opportunity to debate this issue.

27. **MAKINS RECREATION GROUND – QEII FIELD**

The Town Clerk updated the meeting with information he had received from Fields in Trust earlier that day. In the main, this covered the various forms of funding that could be available once the dedication was completed. The overall feeling was that (despite the complexities of the case) the dedication should be progressed. The R&A Committee should bid for the next tranche of funding when it becomes available. The R&A Committee will take this forward and updates will be provided via the R&A Progress Report. It was

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the dedication of Makins Recreation Ground as a QEII Field be now progressed.

28. **JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The meeting noted that a consultation exercise was underway on waste management plans and priorities until 2030. Members were invited to visit the appropriate website and put forward their views if they wish. It was

RESOLVED that the consultation be noted and that Members be encouraged to submit their own representations on the Strategy.

29. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Chairman introduced this item and handed out a paper on the subject which detailed his concerns regarding the complaints procedure. Although the new Code of Conduct had been adopted, the area concerning the complaints system had yet to be fully put in place. There was concern as to the lack of consultation by SODC with other town/parish councils before the procedures were drawn up. The main concern was that allegations could be made against a councillor but the individual was not entitled to know the basis on which it was made or who made the complaint. This was felt to be a breach of Human Rights and could impact the democratic process if the Member was then prevented from involving themselves in a particular aspect of council business.

It was also noted by the meeting the tight deadline for responding to SODC before its meeting on 10 July. This would mean the Town Clerk needed delegated authority to forward the Town Council's comments.

It was agreed that the paper supplied by the Chairman form the basis of the response to SODC. However, the sentence under bullet point 4 “*This is even more important now that breaches of the code are a criminal offence*” should be removed as it was incorrect.

The Committee requested that the Town Clerk should be mindful of the language used to ensure that a constructive dialogue ensues. It was

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk (under delegated powers) write to SODC outlining the concerns expressed in the Chairman’s paper. In addition, SODC are asked to consult on these matters with HTC and other bodies affected; and

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that when the finalised Complaints Procedure is published, this is debated under a specific agenda item at Full Council.

30. **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 3 JULY 2012.

31. **CONFIDENTIAL**

i) LEGAL UPDATE

Sports Centre

The meeting noted the £1,000 reduction in the management fee. The question of the lease extension request to 2019 will be considered by the Recreation & Amenities Committee at their meeting on 10 July.

Henley Town Football Club

The Town Clerk advised that legal advice had been sought from OCC solicitors regarding the Club’s latest letter relating to the Club exercising their option to extend the lease on the same terms (with the exception of the level of rent) for a further period of 21 years as set out in the current lease. The question of the loan and level of rent was discussed.

With regard to the loan, a ‘payment holiday’ had already been agreed by the Council and this was due to run out in September. Although the Club should be aware of this date, it was not clear with the change in personnel, that this was the case. It was agreed that the payment holiday should not be extended and that the HTC Accountant should follow up her previous letter to the Club reminding them of the September start date and the level of the outstanding loan.

With regard to the level of rent (currently £300pa) it was agreed that the Town Clerk establishes a fair rent via the District Valuer to act as a benchmark prior to entering into further discussions with the Club. It was

RESOLVED that the Club be informed of the Council's decision not to extend the payment holiday on the loan and that the District Valuer be engaged to report on the fair rent for The Triangle and that a further report be presented to Committee.

Action: HTC Accountant.

Bath Site

It was recognised that before any decisions could be made regarding the future of the Bath Site, a valuation needed to be carried out. It was

RESOLVED that Simmons and Sons are instructed to carry out a valuation of the site and produce a report to be considered by the September FS&M meeting.

The HTC Accountant left the meeting at 9.30.

ii) **NORTHFIELD END**

(Previously item 8 on the agenda)

It was noted that in order to get the submission to the Department for Transport in time to meet their deadline, then the Town Clerk would need delegated powers to achieve this.

a) Submission

The Chairman pointed out a typo in paragraph 9, second line. The word 'support' should be amended to read 'oppose'. There may be one other document added to the submission if it could be located in time and this was the 1974 handover document to OCC which covered highway responsibilities.

A number of attempts had been made by various Members (and the Town Clerk) to have the venue changed from the SODC offices to a building in Henley thus allowing more Henley residents to attend should they wish without having to make a 20 mile round trip. To date no venue change had been agreed.

A Member requested that the submission states that the decision to oppose the Stopping-Up Order was passed on a majority vote and did not have the unanimous support of the Council. The Chairman undertook to update the submission accordingly. The view was also expressed that it was disappointing that HTC did not have the opportunity to pursue the negotiating route before the date of the Public Inquiry was announced.

One member wondered if more should be made of the fact that the area is in a Conservation area and this should not be overlooked at the Inquiry.

b) Representation

It was agreed that Councillors Reissmann, Akehurst, Gawrysiak and Clenshaw should represent Henley Town Council at the Public Local Inquiry. Although Councillor Clenshaw is not on the FS&M Committee, it was felt that his professional legal experience would be extremely beneficial

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

- **the submission (suitably amended as outlined above) be forwarded to the DfT and;**
- **Councillors Reissmann, Akehurst, Gawrysiak and Clenshaw should represent Henley Town Council at the Public Local Inquiry.**

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Chairman
4.7.12