

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

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

42. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors C W Gibson and Dr B Wood.

43. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Dr P Skolar – Min 46 – Progress Report (Northfield End) – personal – (OCC Councillor). Min 48 – budget/moorings – personal (boat owner). Councillor D Nimmo-Smith – Min 46 – Progress Report (Northfield End) – personal – (OCC Councillor).

44. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

There were no questions from the public.

45. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 6 July 2010 were received, approved, adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

46. **PROGRESS REPORT**

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

**Northfield End**

The OCC letter from their legal department dated 9 August was reviewed but was felt to be incorrect as Councillors did not accept that 'burden of proof' did in fact lie with the individual. It was agreed that the Town Clerk should respond to OCC quoting the relevant sections of the Highways Act (for clarity). Councillor I Reissmann undertook to assist the Town Clerk in this exercise and provide the source material necessary for the letter.

*Action: Town Clerk and Councillor I Reissmann.*

The meeting was also advised that some of the houses in the affected area of Northfield End had received letters from OCC referring to a consultation process. It was not clear why only some of the houses had been contacted and why HTC had not been notified. The Town Clerk was charged with writing to OCC for further information.

*Action: Town Clerk and Councillor I Reissmann (to provide copy of appropriate letter).*

It was also noted that OCC had turned down a Freedom of Information request on the basis that the information would be too expensive to supply. It was agreed that the request should be resubmitted in a more detailed and specific form.

*Action: Councillor I Reissmann to provide the necessary draft.*

#### Strategy Document

The updated strategy document was noted.

### 47. **FINANCE**

#### i) Budget Monitoring Report

It was noted that the Capex sheet showed a projected spend on the lay lights of £5k however the latest replacement estimate is for £30k, leaving a £25k shortfall for which there was no provision.

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

#### ii) Investment Performance Update

A meeting with the Investment Managers had been scheduled for Friday 8 October. It was the intention to get reassurance from the Managers that the expected £160k annual income could still be achieved.

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

#### iii) Monthly List of Payments & Cumulative Supplier Costs

Members had before them the List of Payments and Cumulative Supplier Costs, copy having been issued.

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

### 48. **2011-12 BUDGET**

Members had before them a draft budget for 2011-12, copy having been issued. The budget papers did not include any additional commitments that the other committees may wish to add. The budget would be reviewed again at the next FS&M meeting on 2 November when all the discretionary items would be included.

Inevitably, some of the budget assumptions e.g. a council tax increase were politically sensitive and this may have an effect on final adoption.

It was **RESOLVED**

that the draft estimates of income and expenditure for 2011-12 be presented to the respective committees for their further consideration; and

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the Finance Strategy & Management Committee's draft income and expenditure figures for 2011-12 be approved.

49. **GRANT TO KENTON THEATRE**

A question was raised concerning the number of conditions put on the Kenton grant. The Town Clerk confirmed that the report was correct as there was only one which stated that the grant could only be used to purchase the freehold of the theatre.

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

that a virement of £10,000; £5,000 from the Legal & Professional Fees budget and £5,000 from the Contingency budget to the Grants budget be approved to finance the grant awarded to the Kenton Theatre; and

**RESOLVED**

that Committee notes that by implication there will be less general contingency available for use by all Committees for the remainder of 2010/11.

50. **GRANTS**

The Chairman emphasised that the grants budget was smaller than in previous years but was minded to keep some of the budget back for awards later in the financial year. In this way applications submitted in the New Year would not be disadvantaged. The Town Clerk reminded the meeting that grants made by the Council should primarily be for local organisations or those who directly benefited all or some of the residents. With both those points in mind, each of the applications was assessed.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the following grants be awarded:

- St John's Ambulance (Oxon) £ 500
- Henley Round Table £ 500
- Henley Womens Regatta £ 500
- Headway (Thames Valley) £ 138.60 (free use)
- Henley Sensory Room £ 265
- Henley & District Organ Trust £ 450
- HoT Rotary Club Benevolent Fund £ 184.50 (free use)

Applications from the following were not successful:

- MS Therapy Centre (Berks)
- Riverside Counselling Services
- Cancer Research UK

The remaining balance (c£2,300) from the budget would be made available for further applications to be considered at the March FS&M meeting.

51. **ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

The meeting endorsed the content of the report and the proposal to implement those initiatives that would be most effective and achieve the shortest payback time. Councillors were mindful that winter was coming and as such it would be preferable if the work, especially the insulation, was in place before energy consumption, in terms of heating, increased. Consequently, it was agreed that the Town Clerk should proceed immediately and not have to wait for ratification from Full Council since provision has already been made for this work in the planned maintenance budget for 2010-11.

Considering the cost of the proposals, the question was raised concerning the availability of grants to meet (or part meet) the cost. The Town Clerk was charged with making the appropriate enquires and reporting his findings. He also confirmed that the maintenance budget for 2011-12 had not been prepared in detail as yet.

*Action: Town Clerk*

It was recognised that current thermostatic radiator valves (TRV) in the Town Hall should be working in conjunction with the zoned areas to ensure heat is not wasted. However, some doubt was cast as to whether the two did actually function correctly. It was agreed that this issue needs to be investigated before any further TRVs are fitted. There was also the possibility that an air re-circulation system could be fitted although it was recognised that retro-fitting in a listed building may present too many problems. The Town Clerk reported that the installation of a ventilation system for the downstairs office was actively being pursued.

It was **RESOLVED**

that Councillors note the above action being taken and authorise the Town Clerk (with delegated authority) and Town Sergeant to proceed with the loft insulation in the Town Hall and Old Fire Station Gallery and such improvements as are recommended in the plumbing report for the Town Hall subject to the overall limit of £10,000 in total spend.

52. **RETIREMENT POLICY**

The Town Clerk introduced the paper covering the policy for retirement. He explained that the policy had been prepared having regard to the county council's policy and advice from the Council's HR consultants, Ellis Whittam. Updates would be required in future as legislation changed. No questions were raised on the statement or the policy.

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

the proposed retirement policy statement be received, approved and adopted.

53. **PINSENT/REDGRAVE AWARD**

Councillors Mrs E Hodgkin and Mrs J Bland had previously met and discussed the issue of the award and the paper presented to the meeting was the results of that discussion. It was generally felt that the award had merit and should be supported and the £250 cost should be built into next year's budget.

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

the Pinsent/Redgrave award be re-instated and presented in 2011.

*Town Clerk's note:*

- a) *Sir Steven Redgrave has confirmed that he is still content for his name to be associated with the cup. A response is still awaited from Sir Matthew Pinsent.*
- b) *Following discussions with the FS&M Chairman it has been decided that the responsibility for this item should not rest with the Finance area and will now become the responsibility of the Town & Community Committee.*

54. **HTC DATA MANAGEMENT/IT UPDATE**

It was originally anticipated that there should be a move towards a paperless office. This would entail the electronic distribution of both minutes and agendas. However, attention was drawn to the Local Government Act 1972 schedule 12, para 10(2) (b) which states that agendas and papers must be left or sent by post to the usual residence of every member of the council and while this requirement was extant, no changes to the current procedures would be made and Phase 3 of the IT Review would be 'parked'.

It was noted that other Councils did use electronic distribution methods and the Town Clerk was asked to check with NALC for the correct interpretation of the law. It would also be an opportunity to enquire when the Local Government Act would be updated to reflect the latest technological advances.

*Action: Town Clerk.*

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

Councillors note the proposed improvement process; and that progress monitoring reports are brought before FSM in January 2011 and April 2011.

55. **HENLEY TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB (HTFC)**

The Chairman updated the meeting with the results of the visit made to HTFC, the current state of the Club and the proposed future changes which were hoped to bring the Club back to financial viability. The Club had put forward 5 main areas where they required the Council's support:

- a) Waiving of the HTC loan.

Despite the fact that provision had been made in the accounts for this loan to be written off, it was felt that waiving the outstanding amount was not in the interest of the Council and would prompt other organisations with HTC loans to ask for similar favourable treatment.

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

the loan repayments would be put on hold for 2 years to allow the Club to achieve a more sound financial footing. The position would be reviewed after this time.

b) Rent level.

The level of rent (£300pa) was not seen as excessive and there was no justification for reducing or waiving the rent. However, it was recognised that increasing the rent at this time would not be beneficial to the Club.

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

the current level of rent is held for 2 years and would be reviewed again in September 2012.

c) Development of land beyond the existing pitch.

This area of land to the rear of the Triangle is currently overgrown and would need maintenance before it could be used as a training pitch. However, the area is rarely used by the general public and therefore did not constitute a loss of amenity land.

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

the Town Clerk writes to HTFC stating that the Council agrees in principle to the request but can only give formal permission once HTFC have submitted more detailed plans.

d) Reserved car parking spaces.

The meeting did not agree that the Club should manage the Mill Lane car park. It was recognised that there could be particular problems on match days especially if the general public has already occupied most of the spaces but this was a problem that would have to be accepted. It was suggested that an area of the car park (hatched yellow) was already allocated to the Club a number of years ago and they were to be used for match officials. The Town Clerk would investigate the claim and report back to Committee.

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

the proposed management of the car park by HTFC and/or a request for additional dedicated spaces be rejected.

e) Extension of lease

The terms of the lease states that the Council cannot unreasonable withhold permission to extend the lease for a further 21 years if HTFC requests such an extension.

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

the Town Clerk incorporates in his letter the Council's agreement to the 21 year lease extension.

56. **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 21 SEPTEMBER 2010.**

57. **CONFIDENTIAL**

**i) LEGAL UPDATE**

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

Arising from the report:

Registration of HTC Land

The meeting noted that the Town Hall was now registered with the Land Registry and the FS&M Committee Administrator was thanked for the work undertaken to achieve this.

Bath Site

The Town Clerk reported that despite pressing the Rod Eyot director no further progress has been made on the lease. It was agreed that a deadline of 23 November (Full Council) should be given for finalisation of the document.

Stepping Stones

It was reported that favourable discussions had been held with St John's Ambulance and the intention is still to relocate them to Brunner Hall leaving Stepping Stones with the exclusive use of the first floor at the Pavilion.

**ii) VALUE FOR MONEY & RESOURCES WORKING GROUP**

One of the items from the 9 September meeting was the potential sale of Parrot's moorings. It was believed that the asking price was c£750k and the business generated an income of c£28k. It was not clear whether a successful offer had been made. The Town Clerk was charged with approaching the agents (Savills) to request a copy of the sale details including items such as the rateable value and then report the findings to Councillors.

*Action: Town Clerk*

The latest business rate valuations for the Council properties had now been received. Councillor Mrs J Bland and the HTC Accountant will meet to see if there is any scope for requesting reductions. The outcome will be reported to the appropriate VFM meeting.

*Action: Councillor Mrs J Bland/HTC Accountant*

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

the notes of the Value for Money and Resources meetings held on 26 July and 9 September be received and approved.

**iii) 40 ACRE FIELD**

It was envisaged that the tree planting within the designated area of the field would not take place until November next year. As this area was the poorest, in terms of soil condition, Mr Aird the tenant had not raised any objections. Neither would it prove to be an obstacle to re-tenanting the field when the current tenancy expires at the end of December 2010.

Concern was raised about the possibility of the rent comprising, in part, fencing obligations. There may be a tax issue associated with any such arrangement and the HTC Accountant was asked to investigate.

*Action: HTC Accountant*

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

- a new 3 year tenancy is granted to Mr Aird,
- the tenant to be responsible for the Council's proper legal fees,
- the Town Clerk to be given delegated authority to negotiate the annual rent ideally c£2,100pa but to be reduced pro rata when the final area to be let is known.
- should any fencing be required, the Town Clerk shall engage Mr Aird (if appropriate) to provide, at cost, as part of the rent.

**iv) 36 MARKET PLACE**

The meeting noted a valuation that had been provided.

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

no further action be taken and the VFM recommendation of 26 July is adopted

The meeting closed at 22.00 pm.

Chairman  
22.9.10