

**Present:** Councillor Ian Reissmann (Chair)  
Councillor Rob Romans (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Ken Arlett (Mayor)  
Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak  
Councillor Will Hamilton  
Councillor Lorraine Hillier  
Councillor Paula Isaac (sub for Councillor Sarah Miller)  
Councillor Laurence Plant

**In attendance:** Liz Jones – HTC Accountant/RFO  
Cath Adams – Proper Officer/Planning & Projects Manager  
Caroline Adamson – Committee Administrator  
1 member of the media  
2 members of the public

23. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Eggleton, Hinton and Miller.  
Councillor Isaac substituted for Councillor Miller

24. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

25. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

Mrs Alasia of Makins Road, Henley, mentioned that the land at 353 – 357 Reading Road was the last piece of land in Henley that could be used for social housing (not affordable housing which most people couldn't afford anyway). This relates to Agenda item 11 (update on 353 – 357 Reading Road project).

26. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management Committee held on 28 May 2019 were received, approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

27. **PROGRESS REPORT**

The RFO drew attention under the General Data Protection Regulation Section that as from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019, all Councillors will only receive emails from staff on their Henley Town Council email accounts.

**It was RESOLVED that the Progress Report be received and noted.**

28. **FINANCE**

i) **Dashboard papers and Management Accounts**

Under point 6 of the Executive Summary (Page 10 of the agenda - CIL/S106 funds), a Councillor suggested that SODC could attend a FSM Meeting to have a discussion on how S106 funds would be spent. It was agreed that SODC should be asked, though in general the obligations on developers related to affordable housing, most notably the £800k attributable to 345 Reading Road. There are unlikely to be many more S106 developments as they are largely superseded by CIL.

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

ii) **Investment Performance**

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

iii) **List of approved payments from May 2019**

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

iv) **Progress report detailing grants already applied for by HTC**

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

v) **Expenditure from CIL Funds for an additional layby at Gillotts Field.**

There was concern regarding the cost of £29,500 for an extra layby where an area of verge is used and has become muddy.

It was suggested that Oxfordshire County Council should pay half of the costs, but it was also pointed out that the matter was entirely a Henley Town Council one so OCC would not be contributing.

Councillors would like to see a clearer plan and what specifications had been given to contractors, and it was considered that the Council should have a say in which contractors are used for this project. It is uncertain whether the draft plans had already gone out to tender. The Proper Officer believed that £29,500 had been the cheapest quotation obtained through OCC – some information had been presented at a previous Planning meeting. If further information can be obtained in time this could be presented for consideration at Full Council, but as things stand Councillors did not approve this expenditure from CIL funds.

**It was RESOLVED that Councillors should be given a clearer plan of the proposal before any decisions are made, to be reconsidered at Full Council if further information emerges in time.**

29. **BUDGET TIMETABLE**

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the timetable be ADOPTED.**

30. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME – DISCRETIONARY POLICY STATEMENT**

The RFO drew attention to the paragraphs she had highlighted in the Pensions Discretions Policy Statement, and explained in the report.

A Councillor asked how a case for flexible retirement, for instance, would be considered. The RFO responded that Councillors would be asked to consider a business case for such action and that it would need Full Council approval.

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the amendments be APPROVED.**

31. **UPDATE ON THE COLUMBARIUM PROJECT**

The update report was noted and it was commended that a prudent course of action was being followed in delaying the project until the spring to ensure that the damp prevention measures had worked before installing any internal woodwork.

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the update report be noted.**

32. **COMPUTER HARDWARE COSTS 2019-20**

It was agreed that these costs could not be avoided as some of the Council's equipment is out of date and very slow. A Councillor commented that the new computers will improve morale and productivity.

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that:**

**Expenditure on new computers of up to £18,500 be approved;**

**Delegated powers be given to the Town Clerk and RFO for a further £2,000 to be spent should the final figures increase slightly;**

**£12,000 of the cost to come from earmarked reserves towards a new server that may not be required in 2023, with the balance to come from 2019/20 capex.**

33. **353 – 357 READING ROAD – UPDATE AND RESULTS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION SURVEY**

A Councillor stated that it was disappointing that only 95 Henley residents had completed the online survey, considering that there are over 12,000 residents in Henley. There was concern at the lack of response as the wider community needs to be considered in this project. It was suggested that the Viability Report should be released to the public and that the facility in Wallingford shows the way forward and how not just sporting people should benefit.

The Proper Officer spoke about the report and emphasised that the public consultancy was widely advertised, including being a lead feature in the Henley Standard. One of the five main categories of negative response was the need for social housing.

Councillors agreed that the 'direction of travel' was good and that the report indicates that there is a positive response to the project and that the report sums up well the feeling of the community. The report captured the positive views of the public but also raised concerns which still need to be resolved.

Under section 4.3 of the report, it was agreed that up to £2,000 could be allocated from the Legal and Professional Fees budget.

It was RESOLVED that the update report be RECEIVED and NOTED.

34. **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 9 JULY 2019.**

35 i) **LEGAL UPDATE**

The updates were noted and the following comments were made:

Part a) - Fairmile Access

A Councillor asked about VAT on the promotion costs. The RFO stated that if we are charged a fee plus VAT, we will have to pay the VAT and we will not be able to recover it and so it will increase our costs. The Council had taken professional advice on this. It was pointed out that the VAT was not a deal-breaker in relation to the overall figures.

Part b) - Land next to 65 Valley Road

A verbal update was received – the matter is being dealt with by the Council's solicitor and the Land Tribunal.

Part c) - Henley Rugby Club – sub lease to Physiologics

Henley Rugby Club have agreed to pay the expected legal fees and will be invoiced directly, so this matter has been resolved.

Part d) – New Street Slipway

The paperwork is at the Land Registry and further statements are being taken from two Councillors with long standing knowledge of the slipway.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Legal Update be noted.

36) **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO PURCHASE COUNCIL LAND**

There was a short discussion where it was unanimously agreed that the Council does not wish to sell the land.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Committee instructs the RFO to respond that the Council is not willing to consider the sale of the land in question.

*The Planning and Project Manager left the meeting at 8.28pm and the Committee Administrator left at 8.35pm.*

37) **STAFFING REPORT**

The staffing report attached to the agenda was considered.

**It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the recommendations in the report be APPROVED.**

The meeting closed at 8.44pm

Chairman  
09.07.19