

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

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

102. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Miss L Hillier and Mrs J Wood.

103. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs E Hodgkin – Min 106 – Trustee/Management Committee of 60+ Club

104. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

105. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance Strategy and Management (FS&M) Committee held on 11 March 2014 were received, approved and adopted and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

106. **PROGRESS REPORT**

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

IT Equipment

The Accountant confirmed the new IT equipment (work stations and server) will be installed at the end of April/early May. The work will be carried out over a weekend to cause minimum disruption to office staff. However, the supplier will be on site on the Monday morning to troubleshoot any issues raised by users. The Accountant will also take the opportunity to speak to the supplier concerning both the Wi-Fi connection issues within the Town Hall and the Kings Arms Barn and its coverage.

Estate Inspections.

Four inspections remained outstanding. The Chairman reminded the meeting that Council had resolved that these continue and it was agreed that it provided effective on-going continuity of inspection. The use of a variety of substitutes was therefore not desirable in the long-term.

The Committee Administrator was asked to e-mail all Councillors asking for volunteers to cover the outstanding areas so that the inspection round can be completed.

Planned maintenance

It was pointed out that, in future, references to the 'Over 60s Club' should be replaced with '60+ Club'

In answer to a question, the Chairman confirmed that the item on Northfield End had been transferred to the Town & Community Committee as the financial and legal aspects had largely been dealt with.

107. **FINANCE**

i) Management Accounts

There was a short debate including whether the Council Tax should have been increased considering the projected end of year surplus, the percentage level of increase across each of the Council Tax bands and the actual level of national inflation over the last three years. The Accountant confirmed that the Band D rate was used (and published) as a Government measure for comparative purposes and that the percentage increase for Henley residents was the same regardless of which Council Tax band the property fell into.

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

ii) Investment performance

The meeting noted the information provided on the update report.

It was RESOLVED that the update be received and noted.

iii) List of payments

No comments were made on the listings.

It was RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

108. **EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Accountant explained the importance of earmarking reserves which are set aside for specific purposes and for savings for future projects. The comprehensive list comprised the costs of projects to which the Council was committed as well as on going provisions towards significant replacement costs such as parks equipment and the Astroturf at Jubilee Park. The meeting agreed this was a prudent long term strategy.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that £278,749 (as at 31 March 2014) was carried forward as earmarked reserves.

109. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Chairman gave the background to this item which had resulted in a number of representations to SODC concerning the areas the Council felt appropriate to be included within the Henley parish boundary. Another consultation round had been announced and he believed there were three options available to the Council:

- a) Reiterate the case already made in previous representations, or
- b) Accept the draft proposals made by SODC and accepting the fact that there had to be a compromise, or
- c) Pursue the point with SODC that should Highlands Farm form part of the housing allocation in the Neighbourhood Plan then it would be better placed within the Henley parish.

It was noted that any recommendation made to Full Council on 6 May would be considered before the housing allocation was known. However, the response to SODC was not due until 31 May so there would be an opportunity to reconsider. The Chairman confirmed that SODC had stated that a boundary review can be instigated at any time if a potential development takes place.

The meeting felt it was important to pursue the matter especially in the case of Highlands Farm where access would be directly into Henley rather than Harpsden and therefore would depend, to a very large degree, on the Henley infrastructure.

After further debate,

It was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk contacts SODC to ask exactly under which circumstances boundary reviews are triggered. It was requested that SODC's response be in writing so it could be circulated to all Councillors.

It was RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Town Clerk writes to SODC :

- **Reiterating the Councils original objections to SODC's proposals and restating the desire to have Highlands Farm and the Town Green within the Henley parish.**
- **[In addition, SODC need to be made aware that Highlands Farm is not just an area of land with a farmhouse but contains a number of residential properties and businesses providing employment.]**
- **Requesting confirmation that a boundary review will be undertaken after the housing allocation is made but before planning permission is granted as it was imperative that the Town Council are involved in infrastructure planning.**
- **Requesting details of the proposed timescales between the Neighbourhood Plan referendum and boundary review.**

110. **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 15 APRIL 2014.

111. **CONFIDENTIAL**

i) LEGAL UPDATE

Kiosk

The Town Clerk confirmed that the final draft version of the lease had been received on 15 April. The Council solicitor and the Town Clerk will be checking the amendments to ensure all the points had been covered. It is intended the lease will be recommended for acceptance at Full Council on 6 May.

Fairground rides

The lease will be completed as soon as the kiosk lease is completed.

ii) LEGAL GROUP MEETING

The Committee considered the notes of the Legal Group meeting held on 8 April and the draft letter to Field Seymour Parkes. The meeting was content with the direction and content of the letter but recommended that the draft is seen by the Council's solicitors to give them an opportunity for input before despatch.

iv) BATH SITE PARKING

The meeting discussed the content of the letter submitted by one of the Rod Eyot residents concerning the increase in the parking charges at the Bath Site. There was overwhelming sympathy with the resident's situation following the recent floods and the damage they had caused. However, it was felt that no meaningful concession could be made with regard to the parking charges without providing financial relief to the other island residents, as well as other residents of the Town who had suffered damage during that period.

It was RESOLVED that the resident should be advised that although the Council deeply sympathised with their plight, the increase in charges, as notified, will stand.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Chairman
16.4.14