

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

held on Monday 8th May 2006

PRESENT Councillor Ms. J.E. Bramwell, Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	V.M. Abraham	Councillor	C.H. Spruytenburg
"	A.K. Bacon	"	Mrs P.R. Wilkinson MBE
"	M. Bignell	"	P. Woodburn
"	N.L. Brown	"	P.W. Yerrell
"	M. Fayyaz		

In Attendance

Councillors E.L. Bamford, Mrs J.C. Fulford, Mrs P.R. Lindsley and Mrs M. Molesworth

Officers: W. Richards - Town Clerk
 S. Pearson - Finance and Contracts Manager

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P.J. Murphy

77. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ms. Bramwell declared an interest in Agenda Item 5 – N.A.L.C ‘Local Vision’ Conference – in light of the fact that she had expressed a possible wish to attend the event.

78. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 27th March 2006 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Councillor P.W. Yerrell arrived at the meeting at 7.37pm

79. **CCTV PROVISION IN CHESHAM**

The Committee considered the report from the Town Clerk in respect of the future of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) provision in the town.

Members noted that the current partnership agreement with Chiltern District Council was due to expire at the end of this financial year (March 31st 2007) and, to date, no meaningful discussions had taken place with the principal authority in regard to a possible renewal of the agreement. The Committee was of the view that the town generally benefited from CCTV provision, though its level of effectiveness since the monitoring operation was changed to Wycombe was queried.

A discussion took place on any future financial contribution from the Council to the scheme. Members were reminded that the Council had originally agreed only to contribute to the scheme up to the end of 2006/07 and, since the agreement had commenced, it was noted that Chiltern District Council had fully funded other such provision across the District. Accordingly the view was expressed that it could be construed that the tax payer in Chesham was contributing twice for CCTV. The Committee, while cognisant that possible new proposals for countywide provision were being formulated, considered that the District Council should be informed of the Council's initial position that it would be making no further contributions to the scheme once the current agreement expired.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Committee confirm its support for the continuation of CCTV provision within town but inform Chiltern District Council that it currently does not intend to financially contribute to any new agreement.

Councillor Ms J.E. Bramwell vacated the Chair for the next item and left the meeting. Councillor V.M. Abraham took the Chair.

80. **N.A.L.C 'LOCAL VISION' CONFERENCE**

The Committee debated whether it wished to send one or more Members to the National Association of Local Councils' (N.A.L.C.), 'Local Vision' conference due to take place on the 1st and 2nd June in London. Members were advised that this was the first such conference aimed predominantly at elected representatives. Councillor Mrs Molesworth withdrew her expression of interest in attending, thereby leaving Councillors Bamford and Ms Bramwell as possible nominees.

The Committee was made aware that an underspend in last year's Members' training and conference budget would allow for the two Members to attend

without creating a potential overspend this financial year. A debate then ensued on the desirability of sending any, or more than one, Member to the conference. After some discussion, it was proposed by Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg that *‘Councillors Bamford and Ms Bramwell be authorised to attend the conference on the Council’s behalf’*

This was **CARRIED** by 5 votes to 2.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that Councillors Bamford and Ms Bramwell be authorised to attend the National Association of Local Councils’ ‘Local Vision’ conference on the 1st and 2nd June 2006.

Councillor Ms J.E. Bramwell returned to the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

81. **ALTERATION TO GRAVE DIGGING CONTRACT AND BURIAL FEES**

The Committee considered the appointment of a new grave digging contractor and a review the Council’s interment fees in light of the present gravedigger giving up the responsibility.

Members were informed that the officers had approached the next lowest tenderer of two years ago and this company was currently carrying out any grave digging required on an ad hoc basis. However, due to increases in fuel and labour charges over two years and the new additional requirement that the grave digger removes any surplus spoil post-funeral, the Committee was advised that the current prices charged by this company are significantly higher than their tender of 2004. However, these prices remain below that of the third tender received in that year.

In light of the higher costs incurred, the Finance and Contracts Manager recommended that the amended interment fees, as presented to the Committee, be adopted and implemented following the next Council meeting scheduled for the 22nd May 2006.

Having received assurances that the recommended contractors would offer a high quality service and conform with all legislation pertaining to burials, it was

RESOLVED

1. that the Company who submitted the second lowest grave digging tender in 2004 be offered a contract, to the 31st March 2008, commencing at the new prices reported to the Committee.
2. that the depths of graves be amended to 1m 37cm (4'6") single and 2m (6'6") double and the recommended scale of charges be amended accordingly.
3. that the proposed charges be agreed to apply to any burials taking place after the Council meeting to be held on the 22nd May 2006.

82. **CEMETERY LODGE**

It was reported that Paradigm Housing had contacted the Town Hall to inform officers that the existing tenant at 185 Bellingdon Road had served notice to it to vacate. Accordingly Paradigm's officers had enquired whether the Council is happy for them to re-let the property.

The Committee expressed no wish to sell the property at the present time and it was

RESOLVED

that the Council continues to allow 185 Bellingdon Road to be let by Paradigm Housing.

83. **FINANCIAL REPORT – FINAL OUT-TURN 2005/06**

The Financial Report for the year 2005/06 was presented by the Finance and Contracts Manager. He reported a net improvement of £62,000 against the revised budget and highlighted the £29,000 improvement on the Elgiva budget due to improved income, savings on wages and electricity. He further recommended that the Committee add the sickness savings of £2,000 to the long-term sickness reserve.

Members welcomed the figures and the view was expressed that some of these savings could be used as match funding to any future Lottery bid in relation to Lowndes Park.

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. that the report be noted and that the Renewal and Repairs and Capital Schemes not completed in 2005/2006 be carried over to 2006/07 together with the other items identified in the report.
2. the sickness savings be added to the long-term sickness reserve.

84. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was

RESOLVED

that the public and the Press be excluded in accordance with the Public Bodies (Access to Meetings) Act 1960, as matters which are confidential are about to be discussed.

85. **CEMETERY CHAPEL TENDERS**

The Committee considered the tenders for the various repairs and renewals that had been previously identified as essential works and reported to the Recreation and the Arts Committee on the 6th June 2005.

The Finance and Contracts Manager reported that a proper specification had been drawn up by surveyors but the companies had not been able to provide a definitive quotation on the flooring since the amount of restoration work would not be known until the floor had been lifted. The flooring, and other minor additional works, had therefore been removed when considering the tenders. Two companies had submitted very similar quotations on this basis and the Finance and Contracts Manager recommended the company listed as 'D', which was local and had undertaken many building contracts for the Council, be selected to undertake the works.

Following clarification that all future guttering clearance work would be undertaken by the Parks and Premises team and the Finance and Contracts Manager would pursue to the matter of a guarantee for the flooring, it was

RESOLVED

1. that Company 'D' be appointed to carry out the tender works.
2. that the other non-urgent repairs and heating be considered further following completion of the above works.

86. **UPDATE ON AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHESS VALLEY SPORTS AND LEISURE ASSOCIATION (CVSLA) AND STRIDES**

The Committee was informed that the date for the renewal of the agreement between CVSLA and Strides Gym at the swimming pool had passed and it appeared that the two parties still had a number of issues to resolve. While it was noted that the agreement did not directly affect the Council, some concern was expressed on the legal position in terms of its original lease with CVSLA.

Members agreed that the Council should do all it could to assist CVSLA and the Committee expressed its wish that the negotiations in respect of the agreement between CVSLA and Strides be concluded satisfactorily. In the interim, it was agreed that a Members' working party be set up to meet with representatives of CVSLA to ascertain how the Council could best assist with the discussions.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillors Ms Bramwell, Mrs Fulford, Mrs Lindsley and Mrs Wilkinson be requested to represent the Council in discussions with representatives of CVSLA and report back to a future meeting.

87. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.33 pm.

CHAIRMAN