

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

held on Monday 20th March 2017

PRESENT

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	D. MacBean
"	N.L. Brown	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	Miss E.A. Culverhouse	"	P.W. Yerrell
"	P.J. Hudson		

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.Z. Bhatti MBE, Q. Chaudhry, B.R. Whitfield, S.P. Willmoth and F.S. Wilson. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor R.C. McCulloch.

48. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Mayor, Councillor Brown, sought nominations to elect a Chairman for the meeting.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Brown be elected Chairman of the meeting until the arrival of the Policy and Resources Committee Chairman.

49. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest brought to the Chairman's notice.

It was noted that, as agreed, all previously stated Declaration of Interests remained unchanged from the first meeting of the administrative year.

50. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 9th January 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

51. **CHESHAM & DISTRICT TRANSPORT USERS' GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham & District Transport Users' Group of the 10th January 2017.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

52. **STAFF AND STRATEGY WORKING PARTY**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Staffing and Strategy Meeting of the 26th January 2017.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

53. **FINANCE WORKING GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Working Group held on the 23rd February 2017.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

54. **COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURE REVIEW**

The Clerk explained that both this policy and the following policies on the agenda were due for their four year review.

Councillor Bacon pointed out that the terms of reference for the new Staffing Committee did not make reference to considering complaints and it was agreed the terms of reference needed to be amended to reflect this.

Members had no comments to make on the policy itself and it was

RESOLVED

that the revised policy be adopted.

55. **BULLYING AND HARASSMENT POLICY REVIEW**

Members had no comments to make on the revised Bullying and Harassment policy and it was

RESOLVED

that the revised policy be adopted.

56. **DISCIPLINARY POLICY AND PROCEDURE REVIEW**

Members had no comments to make on the revised Disciplinary policy and procedure and it was

RESOLVED

that the revised policy be adopted.

57. **GRIEVANCE AND COLLECTIVE GRIEVANCE POLICY REVIEW**

Members had no comments to make on the revised Grievance and Collective Grievance policy and it was

RESOLVED

that the revised policy be adopted.

58. **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE REVIEW**

Members had no comments to make on the revised Whistleblowing policy and procedure and it was

RESOLVED

that the revised policy be adopted.

Note: Councillor McCulloch arrived at the meeting at 7.50pm. Councillor Yerrell left the meeting at 7.55pm

59. **ADOPTION OF RESERVES POLICY**

The Committee considered the proposed Reserves Policy drafted by the Finance Working Group for possible adoption.

It was noted that the figure presented as an appendix to the Reserves Policy was intended to be a minimum amount and officers also emphasised, as outlined in clause 3 of the policy, that it was intended that the General Reserve be maintained at six months of its annual precept figure at the end of the financial year as a general principle.

It was agreed that clarification was still required on the difference between repairs and maintenance and enhancements/investments in terms of the Reserves budget. Councillor

MacBean advised that he had suggested that the FRS industry standard, as already referred to in the Council's accounting system, be used to differentiate the two categories. Councillor Bacon added that many other Town Councils' Reserves Policy made reference to the Responsible Financial Officer's responsibility to advise the Council about the level of reserves and opined that something to that effect should be incorporated into this Council's policy.

It was agreed that such an important policy document should be considered and adopted by full Council and therefore

RESOLVED

that a revised Reserves Policy document reflecting the comments at this meeting be devised by the Finance Working Group and be brought before the next Council meeting for consideration and adoption.

Note: Councillor McCulloch took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

60. **INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The Committee considered the Internal Auditor's report. It was noted that no major issues had been raised other than the recommendation that the Committee ought to appoint a Member to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts as produced by the Responsible Financial Officer.

As the Member appointed should not be a cheque signatory as authorised by the bank, it was agreed that Councillor MacBean take on this role until the end of the administrative year.

It was

RESOLVED

that the report be noted and that Councillor MacBean be appointed to verify bank reconciliations until the end of the 2016/17 administrative year.

61. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Committee was reminded that revisions to the proposed Standing Orders were put before this Committee at its last meeting and again at the last Council meeting in line with the restructuring of the Council reports. New Financial Regulations, based upon the National Association of Local Councils' model set of Financial Regulations, were considered and adopted at this Committee at its meeting of the 26th September 2016 and, in light of the revisions suggested at the above meetings, both the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations had been amended accordingly.

Members agreed that reference to the Reserves Policy ought to be in the Financial Regulations and that either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor ought to be 'ex-officio' members of every committee with the latter to be a substitute if the former was unable to attend.

It was agreed that these amendments be incorporated into the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as amended, be adopted.

62. **FINANCIAL REPORT TO 28th FEBRUARY 2017**

Members considered the financial report until the end of February 2017.

Following a query from a Member, the Finance and Contracts Manager advised that the Elgiva figures did not reflect any accruals but the theatre overall should come in under budget.

It was

RESOLVED

that the report be noted.

63. **CONSULTATION ON TOWN CENTRE RETAIL AND LEISURE STUDY AND COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE**

Having been informed that the Clerk had now removed the reference to the Council potentially supporting an open culvert section in the town centre, the Committee agreed to endorse the response proposed by the Local Plan Working Group to a Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils' officer's request for comments on Chesham Town Centre to help develop a consultant's report on a Retail and Leisure Survey for Chesham Town Centre.

In respect to the request from the fledgling Community Interest Company for the Council to provide a representative as a corporate body member, it was agreed that Councillor Wilson be appointed to this role with Councillor MacBean as his deputy.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That the proposed response to the Town Centre consultation as recommended by the Local Plan Working Group, as amended, be agreed and endorsed.
2. That the Committee nominate Councillor Wilson as a representative and Councillor MacBean as a substitute for the Chesham Community Interest Company.

64. **PUBLIC BENCHES IN CHESHAM**

The Committee was asked to consider whether it wished to replace any of the benches that have been removed from The Pound, Nutkins Way and Missenden Road following the

Council's earlier decision to take over the provision of public seating in Chesham and an audit of seats by the Parks and Premises team.

It was accepted as a general principle that the Council should only consider the replacement of removed benches if there was obvious public demand which did not appear to be the case with the three benches mentioned. However it was reported that Councillor Fayyaz had indicated he had contacted a benefactor who would pay for a new bench in Nutkins Way at no cost to the Council. The Committee was happy for this to be followed through but it was agreed this ought to happen only after the County Council elections in line with the principle of political 'purdah'.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Nutkins Way bench be replaced on the understanding that it is of no cost to the Council and installed after the County Council elections.

65. **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 following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Access to Meetings) Act 1960, as matters which are considered to be confidential are about to be discussed.

66. **LEASING AGREEMENT FOR PARKS AND PREMISES VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT**

The Committee considered the proposals to lease vehicles as part of the expansion of the Devolved Services provision previously agreed by Council.

It was

RESOLVED

that the leasing agreements as detailed in the Report be agreed.

67. **ELGIVA FIRE SAFETY UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on Fire Safety at the Elgiva.

Having been informed that, as specified in the presented Fire Policy, '*Chesham Town Council and the Town Clerk are required to endorse the policy on an annual basis*', it was

RESOLVED

that the Fire Policy, as presented, be endorsed by the Committee.

68. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

CHAIRMAN