

MINUTES (subject to agreement at the next Committee Meeting)
of a meeting of THE FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 20th
FEBRUARY 2017 AT 7PM IN THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, STONEHOUSE

Present:

Jo Byrne (Committee Convenor)
Paul Stephens (Deputy Convenor)
John Callinan
Pam Swain (Vice Chairman/Deputy Town Mayor)
Theresa Watt (Chairman/Town Mayor)

Also Present: Town Clerk/RFO Gill Jennings, Cllr Trevor Baker

Attendees are reminded that the Proceedings of this meeting may be recorded, filmed or photographed but that any person requiring such a record is asked to give polite notice at the start of the meeting.

K1/353 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

There were no apologies

K1/354 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are reminded of their obligation within the requirements of the Adopted Model Code of Conduct to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests where applicable.

Cllr Byrne declared an interest in K1/362.2 and left the room during discussion

K1/355 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An adjournment of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to raise questions on items on the agenda (3 minutes per person max)

Cllr Baker did not want to raise any questions

K1/356 TO FORMALLY APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16th
JANUARY 2017

The Minutes were approved as a true record by majority vote/1 abstention.

K1/357 TO CONSIDER RENEWAL OF THE CONTRACT FOR YOUTH PROVISION
WITH CURRENT/ANOTHER PROVIDER

The Committee considered renewal of the contract with the current provider on a 3 year term. Members of the Youth Working Group considered this best value therefore had not sought other quotations.

Proposed Cllr Watt/Seconded Cllr Callinan renewal of the contract on a 3 year term at £4649.44 with agreement to the service level agreement on that basis.

All in favour

K1/358 TO RECEIVE A PROGRESS REPORT FROM HIGH STREET EVENTS WORKING GROUP

Committee to agree charges for hire of the town hall for events i.e. fund-raising In Bloom, Horticultural Show meetings

The Committee were made aware of an anomaly in policy between events & meetings. It was agreed that the policy would be reviewed at the next Committee meeting.

Proposed Cllr Watt/Seconded Cllr Callinan that both bookings should be free of charge. All in favour.

Cllr Byrne advised the meeting that the Events Group would be meeting with parties interested in organising a music festival.

K1/359 TO CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE GENERAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

1. Consider amendments to the Co-option Policy, Code of Conduct for recommendation to Town Council

The General Policy Working Group had met to consider amendments.

The Co-option Policy was discussed at length. The draft was proposed for adoption by Town Council by Cllr Watt/Seconded Cllr Swain. Cllr Callinan raised concerns and a recorded vote was requested:

For

Cllr Watt, Swain, Byrne, Stephens

Against

Cllr Callinan

The Code of Conduct amendments were considered to be sound.

Proposed for adoption by Town Council by Cllr Watt/Seconded Cllr Stephens.

All in favour.

2. Consider a draft Council Strategy for 2017-22 which takes account of recent public consultation by the Neighbourhood Plan Group

The draft strategy was proposed for adoption by Cllr Stephens/Seconded by Cllr Swain. Cllr Callinan felt that the Strategy should be delayed until after the Neighbourhood Plan referendum whereas it was clarified this was a living document open to change. A recorded vote was requested.

For

Cllr Watt, Swain, Byrne, Stephens

Against

Cllr Callinan

K1/360 FINANCE

1. To check and agree expenditure/receipts totals against budget headings January.

Expenditure £10431.57 & Receipts £31604.84 Proposed Cllr Swain/Seconded Cllr Watt, all in favour

2. To agree the bank reconciliation January

Proposed Cllr Swain, Seconded Cllr Watt that balance of £81398.65 was agreed as correct.

All in favour.

K1/360 (continued)

3. To agree payments to date, note that the bank have applied service charges which are being queried and to consider payment of an unexpected bill for legal costs

Proposed Cllr Watt/Seconded Cllr Stephens that payments due to cheque 8447 £18196.21 were agreed.

All in favour

The Committee noted that the clerk was making efforts to get an explanation of the £5 month charge suddenly appearing on the business account at Lloyds.

The Committee were made aware of an invoice raised by Phoenix Legal Group for work they claim was carried out in 2010-14, previously not invoiced. The clerk was asked to dispute the invoice.

4. Update on investments and required action

The clerk advised the Committee that the Cooperative Bank were ceasing to offer community accounts and she would be making arrangements to invest in Nat West.

A VAT inspection was due and an investment would be made after the findings were known in case there were errors to address.

K1/361 RISK ASSESSMENT

To consider risks and controls updated from February 2016

The Committee considered an updated Risk Assessment. Cllr Watt proposed, Cllr Swain seconded that the risks and controls be accepted. Carried by unanimous vote. Furthermore the Committee agreed to prioritise resolving the risk to Council's income.

K1/362 TOWN HALL/POST OFFICE PREMISES

1. Receive a report from the Building Facilities Working Group

Cllr Callinan gave a verbal report that the Group had met with Phillip Williams of Gloucestershire County Council and three options were now awaiting County Council response following information provided by the Clerk. The Committee reaffirmed their commitment to pursuing this matter until a conclusion could be reached. Clerk to chase response as Committee agreed not to allow the matter to lapse beyond June without a firm proposal.

2. Discuss the implications of allowing the premises to remain void and consider a community group proposal

The Committee agreed that temporarily expenses derived from the Post Office should be covered by general reserves.

The Council had been approached by a community group requiring a town centre base for an arts project until June 2018, perhaps longer. The Committee considered the request.

Proposed Cllr Watt, Seconded Cllr Stephens that the proposed usage would hinder negotiations in K1/362.1 and the request should not be progressed at this stage.

All in favour.

K1/363 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

3rd April 2017

Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The Committee will pass a resolution excluding the public from Item K1/364 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and publicity of the item would be prejudicial to the public interest

K1/364 To receive Minutes from the Staffing Committee Meeting of the 13th February 2017 and consider any recommendations

The Committee received the Minutes.

Cllr Watt proposed/Cllr Byrne seconded that vacancies should be advertised with the costs coming from the admin expenses budget in the sum of £560.

Carried by Majority vote/1abstention

Due to a lack of time in getting a proposal before ART Committee the Committee were asked to agree training costs for groundstaff at £135 to come out of ART budget. Having agreed the funds to be available and the training necessary this was proposed by Cllr Watt/seconded by Cllr Stephens.

All in favour
