

Minutes of the meeting of the Resources & Policy Committee held at the Sportsman Meeting Room, Birchwood Leisure Centre, Longmead, Hatfield AL10 0AN on Wednesday 30 March 2011 at 19:30.

PRESENT: Councillor D. Berry - Chairman
Councillor C. Juggins - Vice Chairman
Councillor M. Alder
Councillor M. Clark
Councillor K. Langley
Councillor S. Laver-Walton
Councillor R. Wheeler
Councillor G. Wiltshire

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor L. Clark

OFFICERS: C. A. Lloyd (Town Clerk)
P. Widdicombe (Deputy Town Clerk)

81. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

82. QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

83. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2011 were approved and signed as a true record.

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

85. ESTABLISHMENT SUB COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Establishment Sub Committee were noted.

86. STRATEGIC PLAN

Members noted the draft Plan.

RESOLVED that the Clerk commence consultation with users and the public on the Council's Strategic Plan.

(Action: Clerk)

87. FIVE YEAR MAINTENANCE PLAN

Members noted the draft five year maintenance plan. It was noted that the document was not yet complete but was a start towards building an on-going maintenance capital and revenue schedule for Members and Officers.

The Clerk was requested to ensure that the Chairman of Newgate Village Hall Management Committee was asked for the Committee's input.

RESOLVED that the Plan be noted.

88. AUDIT COMMISSION FEE 2008/09

Following the request at the previous meeting, Members were advised that the invoice breakdown was as follows;
£9,200 was the audit fee for that year;
£10,300 was an additional amount for the extra work entailed around Birchwood Playing Fields Trust. This charge was for 1 day auditor's fee, 5 days legal and technical fees and 2 days Audit Manager's fee.

Members were concerned that the Town Council were not the only Local Authority to have found themselves in this situation and therefore the Audit Commission should already have had this knowledge.

Members were also mindful that the Council did not want to receive a qualified audit for 2010/11 for non-payment of Audit fees.

In light of the lateness of their audit and in view of the fact that Hatfield was not the only Local Authority involved in this type of situation, it was RESOLVED that;

- (i) the Audit Commission be requested to reduce their additional fee by 50%; and
- (ii) authority be delegated to the Responsible Finance Officer to conclude the payment of this invoice with or without the 50% reduction depending on the Audit Commission's response.

(Action: Responsible Finance Officer)

89. UNITS OF ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION

Members considered the report of officers detailing the reduction in electricity used since energy saving measures had been carried out.

Members commended the Responsible Finance Officer on his actions and requested that the use of solar power be considered as soon as possible to take advantage of any potential government grant.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(Action: Responsible Finance Officer)

90. TOWN COUNCIL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Members noted the report regarding the repeal of s150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to payments only being made by cheque. A means of internal control would be drawn up in the coming year and submitted to Members so that in future electronic payments could be made.

Members also noted the Audit & Accounts Regulations (England) 2011 had come into force on 31 March 2011 which affected the accounts for 2010/11. The Council's External Auditor would be asked for his requirements in light of the changes.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(Action: Responsible Finance Officer)

91. BOROUGH COUNCIL'S TOWN AND GOWN GROUP

Councillor R. Wheeler was appointed the Council's representative on this Group.

(Action: Clerk)

92. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Members were advised that the work undertaken by SQS on the "Tesco" path through Birchwood Playing Fields had increased in cost as another area had sunk by the entrance and needed building up too.

Officers confirmed that Serco emptied the Council's bins and billed quarterly, other payments to Serco on the schedule were for additional collections due to a function at one of the halls.

Members were advised that SDK were paid per dog bin to empty the dog waste bins on Council land. Bins located on highway or Borough Council land would be emptied by their own contractor.

The pantomime tickets purchased in December had been reimbursed by parents as part of the playscheme fee. Officers advised that trips were proving very popular and were recharged to parents at full cost.

RESOLVED that the schedules be noted and approved.

93. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Noted that the next meeting of the Committee will take place on 9th June 2011 at 19:30.

Closure: 20:33

Chairman