

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 19 April 2016 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

**Present:** Cllrs B Austin, D Bretherton, N Dixon (Town Mayor), D Dodds, M Dyer (Chairman), L Emery (Deputy Mayor), H Fickling, C Jones, P Lambert and T Wyse

**Officers**

G Hunt, Town Clerk

J Howells, Asset Maintenance Manager

C Pinnells, Community Services Manager

M Robinson, Office Administration Manager

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

### 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Butler (Personal) and Champken-Woods (Holiday).

### 2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Cllr Austin declared an interest in item 12 as Chair of the East Thame Residents Association and took part in the discussion but did not vote. Cllr Dyer declared an interest in item 13 as the Council Representative for the Thame Football Partnership, item 15 as Chair of the Thame Business Forum (Cllr Dyer did not vote on this item) and item 20 as a Trustee of the Museum. Cllr Emery declared an interest in item 18 as Chair of the Montesson Twinning Association.

The Town Clerk confirmed that all relevant dispensations were in place.

### 3 Public Participation and Public Questions

Mrs Angela Willson spoke in support of item 14 (Lea Park 20mph speed limit survey) as a member of the Lea Park Residents Association. Mrs Willson had lived on Lea Park for 36 years and recognised the challenges faced by young mums, working people and older residents getting around the estate.

Lea Park estate comprised 1300 houses and was accessed from the Thame By-pass. In theory there was no through traffic but cars were known to travel the length of Cromwell Avenue to exit the estate via the quickest route.

There had been a long term concern from residents regarding speeding on the estate and members of the Residents Association had shown support for a 20mph speed limit. This was also supported by Barley Hill School. Photographs and a map were circulated to illustrate the long stretches of Cromwell Avenue that allowed cars to reach speeds higher than 30mph. The entrance roads were often clogged with parked cars which restricted visibility.

Where 20mph speed limits had been introduced people benefitted from a better quality of life with increases in walking and cycling. National statistics showed that in 20mph areas incidents in collisions are reduced by 6% for every 1mph reduction.

The County Council were supportive of a 20mph speed limit but did not have the funding for the surveys needed to establish justification. As an initial step the residents would appreciate the support of the Town Council in funding a speed traffic survey.

#### **4 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **5 Budget Summary**

Members received the budget summary up to 29 February 2016. A question was raised with regard to expenditure on 119 Corporate Management and why the loan was accounted for here which then distorted the budget comparison. The Town Clerk suggested that this question is raised at the Councillor Finance Training scheduled for Tuesday 5 July 2016.

#### **6 Investment Update**

The summary of the investment performance had not been received, as the meeting this time was scheduled before it was due.

#### **7 Reports from Representatives on External Organisations**

- a) Barns Centre – The report was noted.
- b) Citizens Advice Bureau – The report was noted along with additional information that has since been added. Cllr Austin added that Liz Johnson, John Bright's assistant, would be based at Market House in Thame and a meeting with Liz will be arranged once she was settled.
- c) Health Summit – The report was noted.
- d) NALC – The report was noted.
- e) Thame Business Forum – The report was noted. Cllr Dyer added that in his absence Roger Weaver from DAF had chaired the last meeting. Topics of discussion included an update on apprenticeships and Broadband coverage, with discussion on the current situation with regard to the timing of Cabinets 18 and 21 coming online. The Forum had been well attended with the host company Windles providing members with a tour of their new facilities on Site B.
- f) Thame & District Housing Association – No report received.
- g) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thame – The report was noted.
- h) Welfare Trust (Cllr Champken-Woods) – No report received.

#### **8 Internal Audit**

The Internal Audit Second Interim Update Report 2015-16 had identified no issues which warranted a formal comment or recommendation. Members expressed their appreciation to Council staff for their continued hard work and good practice that ensured the Council continued to operate sound and effective financial controls and procedures.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Internal Audit Second Interim Update Report 2015-16 be approved.*

## **9 Code of Corporate Governance / Financial Management Procedure**

The Code of Corporate Governance and the Financial Management Procedure had been adopted by the Town Council on 3 April 2012 and 1 November 2011 respectively.

The Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer had now been in post for a year and it was an opportune moment to review both documents to ensure they were relevant and up to date.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i) That the updated Code of Corporate Governance and the Financial Management Procedure be adopted.***

## **10 Business Continuity**

The Business Continuity Strategy provided the overall framework for managing the repercussions of a serious incident resulting in major disruption to the business activities of the Council.

The Business Continuity Action Plan aimed to reduce the impact of an incident and provided the Recovery Team with a pre-planned course of actions. Both the Strategy and Action Plan were adopted by the Town Council in November 2012 and had been amended slightly following the review.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Business Continuity Strategy and the Business Continuity Action Plan be approved.***

## **11 Card Payment Machine**

The introduction of a Card Payment machine would provide an additional method of payment for all potential payments to the Town Council on top of the existing cash, cheque and BACS payment methods.

Four financial organisations were approached and provided costings for the provision of a card payment machine. The summary attached to the report showed that Supplier 3 offered the best value in terms of ongoing annual costs.

Members agreed that the introduction of a card payment machine in the Information Centre would be a positive step forward.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i) That the introduction of a card payment machine in the Information Centre be approved.***
- ii) That Supplier 3 be selected as the provider.***

## **12 Disposal of Amenity Land**

A request had been received from the resident of No. 20 Pickenfield to purchase a small strip of land adjacent to his property. If sold the resident intended to use the land as an extension to his garden.

The parcel of land was currently planted with a mixture of shrubs and trees which had matured over the years since the Pickenfield site was developed and which the Council maintained.

Members raised concern that, if purchased, the land should not be developed and a restrictive clause to that effect be inserted into any transfer deeds.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That disposal of the land, as identified in the report be agreed in principle.*
- ii) That a restriction on development of the land be listed as a covenant within any transfer deeds, if the disposal progresses.*

### **13 Thame Football Partnership Permission Requests**

The Thame Football Partnership had the opportunity to level an area of ground to create an additional football pitch and also enhance existing pitches. The Lease required the Football Partnership to obtain written permission from the Town Council as landlord before proceeding with a formal planning application.

Members were also asked to note the potential revenue opportunity for the Football Partnership related to use as a film location and related parking for a 24 hour period.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- i) To recommend to Full Council to agree to Thame Football Partnership submitting the planning application as stated in the report and for officers to take the relevant steps required by the Lease.*
- ii) To recommend to Full Council to note the additional use of the Facility for the purposes of filming and related parking as stated in the report.*

### **14 Lea Park 20mph Speed Limit Survey**

A request had been received from the Lea Park Residents Association for the Council to provide financial support to enable an initial speed survey to be carried out on Lea Park by Oxfordshire County Council.

Speeding had been a concern for residents for some years. Alternative methods of raising speed awareness had been tried but had not addressed the concerns. Residents were keen to introduce a 20mph speed limit on the main roads of the estate. The results of the speed survey would inform the next steps.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- i) To recommend to Full Council that £500 is taken from the Localism Fund to commission the initial speed survey, in conjunction with Lea Park Residents Association.*

### **15 SODC Economic Development Projects**

This update was the third in a sequence of reports provided to the Committee. It highlighted the changes that have occurred and the funding revenue required for each project.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- i) To note the report and recommend to Full Council that the allocation / reallocation of the various funds be as documented.*

**16 Fees and Charges**

The fees and charges for the hire of the Meeting Room, the Upper Chamber and Southern Road Recreational Ground were last reviewed in April 2015. It made sense to review the charges at the start of each financial year to comply with good financial management.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the charge for hiring the Meeting Room remains at £12 per hour.*
- ii) That the charge for hiring the Upper Chamber remains at £27 and £14 per hour.*
- iii) That the charge for hiring SRRG football pitch remains at £32 and £35 per game (inclusive of VAT).*

**17 Town Council Policies**

The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy and Pesticide Policy had been previously drafted but had not come before Council for approval.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy and the Pesticide Policy be approved.*

**18 Town Council Policies**

The Town Twinning Policy and the Partnership Working Code of Practice had been reviewed with minimal changes. The Grant Awards Policy had been updated to reflect the General Power of Competence.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That the Town Twinning Policy, the Partnership Working Code of Practice and the Grant Awards Policy be approved.*

**19 Health & Safety Remedial Works**

Members noted the update with regard to the remedial works required following the Legionella, Asbestos and Fixed Electrical Wire Test of the Town Hall and Southern Road Recreational Ground. The Office Administration Manager reported that since the publication of the report a further reduction in the cost of the remedial electrical works had been negotiated and the cost was now £4,000 plus VAT.

*The report was noted.*

## **20 Thame Museum**

The Thame Museum building improvement project was progressing well. Cllr Bretherton reported that a site visit had taken place with the District Planning Officer, the Conservation Officer and the architect. The meeting had been very positive with the District Officers supportive in principle of the emerging design.

*The report was noted.*

## **21 Compliments & Complaints**

The compliments and complaints were noted.

## **22 For Information**

- a) The CCTV Quarterly Update was noted.
- b) The improvements to the wi-fi in the Upper Chamber were noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.43pm

Signed .....  
Chairman, 2 August 2016