

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 2 August 2016 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

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

Officers

G Hunt, Town Clerk

C Pinnells, Community Services Manager

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence received from Cllrs Butler (Personal), Dodds (Holiday) and Dixon (Personal).

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or Dispensations.

3 Public Participation and Public Questions

There were no applications to address the Committee.

There were no questions put to the Committee.

4 Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 19 April 2016 and 10 May 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Financial Update

The Budget Summary was noted.

A question was raised with regard to Income Line 115 – Car Parks. The Town Clerk responded that the Town Council monitored the High Street and Upper High Street Car Parks on behalf of the County Council. Any income received from the sale of Parking Permits or Parking Fines was ring-fenced to offset the cost of managing the car parks. It was anticipated that there may be a small rise in the purchase of Parking Permits as a result of the current monitoring of parking on the highway.

The Balance Sheet was noted. This had been added to the papers at the suggestion of the Internal Auditor and was covered in some detail at the Financial Training in July.

It was noted that the Financial Training, attended by seven Councillors and five Officers, had taken place on 5 July 2016.

6 Financial Overspends

The following financial overspends were noted:

- a) Tree Grilles in Upper High Street: Under Standing Order 25.0 additional funding of up to £7,526.21 had been authorised to allow the successful completion of the project as

communicated to all Councillors on 29 June 2016. The total Thame Town Council contribution of up to £15,693.76 will come from the Capital Receipts Reserve.

- b) Carnival Float and Beacon Event: These two additional activities had been authorised by Council (Financial Regulation 4.2) and total net cost, to be funded from General Reserves was £229.61 and £230.77 respectively.
- c) Recruitment: The recruitment costs for the full time Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer were £1,775. The recruitment costs for the Community Project Support Officer are £910. Further costs are likely (up to £800) for recruitment of the Market Town Co-Ordinator. These costs have all been approved by the Town Clerk under Financial Regulation 4.5. Agreed budget was £1,000 and excess over budget will be funded from General Reserves.

7 Investment Update

The Investment Update was noted. Members commented that despite the current climate the investment portfolio continued to perform well.

8 Thame Barns Centre

The Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2016 were noted. The good management of the Barns Centre was reflected in the £25k surplus for 2015/16. It was requested that the Council's thanks and appreciation be passed onto the Trustees and Management of the Barns Centre.

9 Reports from Representatives on External Organisations

- a) Barns Centre – The report was noted.
- b) Citizens Advice Bureau – The report was noted.
- c) Health Summit – Cllr Champken-Woods suggested that the Health Summit be re-named Health Hub for future reports. This was agreed.
- d) NALC – The report was noted.
- e) Thame Business Forum – The report was noted.
- f) Thame & District Housing Association – The report was noted.
- g) 21st Century Thame – The report was noted.
- h) Welfare Trust – Cllr Champken-Woods reported that a meeting had taken place at the beginning of July. Awards had been given, the main one being made to the Cricket Club.

10 Community Project Support Officer

Six candidates had been interviewed for the position of Community Project Support Officer and as a result the successful candidate, Lizzie Fuller, would commence employment on Monday 15 August 2016.

11 CCTV Agreement

The working group had met with SODC Officers to discuss the extension of the CCTV Agreement for one year, with a further one year extension option.

Thames Valley Police (TVP) were undertaking a strategic review of CCTV and until definitive information had been received from TVP / SODC it was thought prudent to extend the Agreement year on year rather than entering into a new ten year contract.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The CCTV Agreement one year extension with a further one year extension option with South Oxfordshire District Council be approved.***

12 Devolution

The Town Clerk reported that very little had happened.

The Oxfordshire Together initiative had gone quiet. One main thing to report was that weed control on the footway / highway had seemingly been abandoned by OCC, which had led to numerous complaints being received. This was one aspect that was not covered by the Oxfordshire Together initiative. The OCC / SODC Unitary debate had taken over and this together with the new Government finding its feet had stalled the devolution debate to some extent.

Members noted the paper on devolution produced by the Town Clerk and that copies had been shared with OCC, Grant Thornton and NALC.

13 SODC Economic Development Projects

The update on previously discussed SODC Economic Development Projects was noted.

14 Town Stocks

At the Town Council meeting on 26 April 2016 a question was raised about the whereabouts of the Town Stocks. Further research into the matter had been undertaken, the results of which were included in the report.

Following discussion Members agreed that to make an informed decision more information was needed on the cost, the proposed location and evidence of local support.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Further investigation into the possibility of the installation of Town Stocks be undertaken by Councillors and a detailed proposal be brought back to Council for consideration.***
- i) High work priorities prevented any Officer involvement in further investigations at this stage.***

15 Thame Museum Building Improvement Project

The project to improve the Museum Building was progressing. The architect was awaiting clarification on a couple of points and would then formally submit the plans to the District Planning Authority.

16 Metal Detecting Policy

The Town Council had received requests from individuals and organisations for permission to carry out metal detecting on land owned, leased or managed by the Town Council. The document set out the policy of the Council when dealing with such requests.

It was agreed that the policy would be put to the next meeting of the Trustees of the Thame Museum for their comments.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Metal Detecting Policy be approved.*

17 Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy

The Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy had been reviewed. The two main changes being the removal of the sentence that referred to the disposal of public open space being retained for recreational purposes for the benefit of the public and associated procedures for residents interested in purchasing land.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Land Acquisition and Disposal Policy be approved.*

18 IT Policy

The IT Policy had been reviewed with minor changes made including the use of Twitter and other forms of social media and the removal of the direct threat of dismissal. Should such a case arise it would be investigated and the appropriate action taken.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The IT Policy be approved.*

19 Health & Safety

It was noted that the six monthly Health & Safety visit from Ellis Whittam had taken place on Wednesday 20 July 2016 and that no significant matters requiring Council action had been identified.

20 Town Council Website

It was noted that the new Town Council website had gone live on 5 July 2016 with positive feedback since received. Councillors were urged to explore and use the new website and report any issues to the Community Services Manager, preferably by 11 August 2016.

21 For Information

The items for information were noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.25pm

Signed
Chairman, 1 November 2016