

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 17 July 2018 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs B Austin, D Bretherton, N Champken-Woods, M Dyer (Chairman), H Fickling and A Midwinter (Town Mayor)

Officers

G Hunt, Town Clerk

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 (Holiday), Deacock (Business), Dodds (SODC), Dixon (Business), Emery (Holiday) and Lambert (Business).

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

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 17 April 2018 and 8 May 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Financial Update

All three items were noted; the budget summary up to 30 June 2018, the Balance Sheet and that following the agreed two year interest free period, interest was now being charged on the loan to Chinnor Rugby Football Club.

6 Investment Update

The investment summary was noted. The portfolio continued to do well, the most recent quarter showing a particularly good return.

7 Reports from Representatives on External Organisations

The reports were noted. Cllr Champken-Woods reported he had still not received an update from the Buckinghamshire Health Trust.

8 General Data Protection Regulations / Data Protection Act 2018

The report provided an update on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the measures taken by Officers to ensure the legal requirements which formed part of the new Data Protection Act were met by 25 May 2018.

A Data Audit was undertaken across all areas of data held, a generic Privacy Notice produced and displayed on the Council's website and Privacy Notices for Employment and Recruitment produced.

The Council would continue to have a Data Protection Officer (DPO) although it was not a legal requirement for the Council to do so. The Office Administration Manager will act as the DPO.

Members noted the report.

9 Data Protection Documents

A number of the Council's Policies relating to data protection had been updated to reflect changes within the legislation as prescribed in the new Data Protection Act 2018. The documents now ensured the Council was legally compliant and met its obligations with regard to lawful and fair handling of personal data.

The following Policies and documents have been reviewed; Information and Data Protection Policy, Document Retention & Disposal Policy, Freedom of Information Policy, Freedom of Information Procedure, Information Management Strategy and the Complaints Policy.

Members thanked the Office Administration Manager and Officers involved for all their hard work in updating the documents.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The updated documents as listed be approved.***

10 Loan Policy

The Loan Policy was adopted in July 2014 just prior to the Town Council making loans to Thame Players Theatre Company and Chinnor Rugby Football Club (CRFC). The Town Clerk had reviewed the Loan Policy and had made some changes to take account of more stringent regulations and to reflect experiences established from loans to Thame Players and CRFC.

Members discussed point 2.11 which referred to interest rate charges only being reviewed every five years and agreed to add the word 'normally'.

Points 2.1, 2.13 and 2.14 were also discussed which restricted loans to groups with land or buildings and only for capital spend. It was agreed that some flexibility should be added to the policy to allow for other forms of security / guarantee and not to restrict loans to only capital projects.

The Town Clerk stated that each loan application would be different and the Council had the flexibility to agree appropriate changes when considering individual loan applications.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Loan Policy be agreed with the addition of more flexibility as discussed.***

11 Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure

The Town Council had received a request from South Oxfordshire District Council's Emergency Planning Team for the Town Council's procedure on 'Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure'. The Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee had also attended a recent meeting at which Oxfordshire County Council, in their capacity as Secretariat to the Lieutenancy, had given a presentation on the same topic.

Given the request the Town Council had taken the opportunity to bring its own procedure up to date using the latest guidance and advice, including that from the National Association of Civic Officers.

Members commented on the thoroughness of the revised documents.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure Procedure and Action Plan be approved.***

12 Telephone Contract

The current maintenance contract was due to expire on 19 September 2018. Four companies, including the current supplier had been invited to submit a quotation based on the current requirements of the Council.

It was recommended to renew the contract with the current supplier for another three year period, since they were a tried and tested supplier, there were some financial savings and they remained the overall cheapest supplier.

RESOLVED that:

- i) A new three year maintenance contract with Incom Business Systems be agreed.***

13 Human Resources and Health & Safety Contract

The current Human Resources (HR) and Health & Safety (H&S) contract was due for renewal. Three specialist companies, including the current provider were approached to submit a quotation based on the current requirements of the Council.

It was recommended to renew the contract with the current supplier for a further three year period, as they had provided an efficient and effective service and their quotation was the cheapest.

RESOLVED that:

- i) A new three year Human Resources and Health & Safety Contract with Ellis Whittam be agreed.***

14 Capital Equipment / Rolling Capital Fund – Chamber Chairs

Members noted that following further detailed circulation by e-mail, an additional six chairs had now been identified for further suitability analysis.

A question was raised as to why the process was taking so long? Some explanation and further discussion took place on the process to date. The Town Clerk reported that of the additional six chairs, two were more expensive than the chair from Supplier A, one was supplied flat packed, one only had a 1 year guarantee and was not suitable for people over 18 stone, another also only had a 1 year guarantee and was only suitable for conference and banqueting which left one chair suitable for further analysis.

A proposal was made to go with the Officer recommendation, to purchase 80 chairs from Supplier A. Further discussion ensued. On being put to vote, three Members voted for the proposal and three against.

Following further discussion the Town Clerk stated his intention to order 4 chairs (only available in packs of 4) at a cost of £89 plus VAT, to evaluate against the chair from Supplier A.

15 Free Use / De-Minimis Delegated Authority

Members noted that the Town Clerk, through De Minimis delegated authority, has granted the following:

- a) Free use of Upper Chamber for Citizens Advice AGM on evening of 15/5/18
- b) Free use of Upper Chamber for electric blanket testing on 17/10/18
- c) Free use of Meeting Room for Music in The Park ticket sales on 28/4/18
- d) Free use of SRRG for Scouts AGM / BBQ on 21/6/18
- e) Free use of a parking space at Upper High Street car park on Fridays for NHS stop smoking initiative
- f) Free use of SRRG (and Changing room / electricity access) for Thame Youth Projects from 7pm-9pm on 31/7/18 and 28/8/18

16 Safe Places Scheme

It was noted that the Safe Places Scheme was launched in Thame on 15 May 2018, as communicated by mail to all Councillors on 8 May 2018. The Town Hall is one of a number of designated Safe Places in the town.

17 Memorial Bench at Southern Road Recreation Ground

It was noted that on Sunday 2 June 2018, Deputy Mayor Cllr Emery wore her beanie hat to honour Megan Biddle's mantra of 'Keep Calm and Wear A Hat' as she unveiled the memorial bench at Southern Road Recreation Ground. Megan's family together with over 100 friends and members of the community joined together in the sunshine to witness the unveiling and to see the bench take pride of place on the recreation ground.

Cllr Bretherton thanked Officers for their support with the project. The company who made the bench had not undertaken anything like it before and were over the moon with the finished product. The Council commended the young people involved in raising all the necessary funds.

18 Staffing Update

Members noted that the recruitment process had commenced to find a new Office Administration Manager.

19 Oxfordshire Pension Fund Administration Strategy Statement – Service Level Agreement

It was noted that the Oxfordshire Pension Fund Administration Strategy Statement - Service Level Agreement (as initially approved by the Personnel Committee on 4 November 2014 and then Council on 17 March 2015) had been revised following a consultation process. The Town Council's concerns on unreasonable end of year deadlines were taken on board and the new Service Level Agreement has now been signed.

20 For Information

The items for information were noted.

Unfortunately no members of the CCTV Working Group were available to attend the last meeting. The Community Services Manager called for more volunteers to join the CCTV working group. The next meeting will be 4 November 2018.

The meeting concluded at 7.28pm

Signed
Chairman, 30 October 2018