

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee of Thame Town Council held on 20 November 2012 at 6.30pm In the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs D W Bretherton, D G Butler, N G Champken-Woods (Town Mayor), M Ciortan, D W Dodds, M L Dyer (Chairman), H M Fickling, A Gunn (Vice Chairman), V F Humphries, Peter Lambert (Deputy Mayor), J Matelot Green and M Welply

Non Voting

M Stiles

Officers

Mrs H Stewart, Town Clerk

Mr R Goss, Project Officer

Mrs A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

Mrs C Pinnells, Community Services Manager

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public Participation

There were no applications to address the Committee.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Budget/Finance Summary

Members received and noted the budget summary up to 30 September 2012. The full accounts were available at the meeting.

6 Service Priorities

Members received and noted the progress being made on the service priorities with more priorities having been completed. The request made to SODC to finance the assessment of a viable mixed use scheme on the Cattle Market had been refused so the Town Council had once again, had to commission work to protect the future of Thame.

The Council had written to SODC to request the release of the Front Runner Funding being held in connection with the Neighbourhood Plan. A written confirmation from SODC is expected to state that the funding will not be released. Further action will have to be taken if this is the case because the Government had released other monies to district councils to cover any expenditure for Neighbourhood Plans. Retaining the Front Runner

Funding was obstructing the Governments assistance to local councils for undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan.

When asked about the progress in acquiring the General Power of Competence, the Town Clerk stated quite firmly that with the demands of the Neighbourhood Plan there wasn't any time left in the day to even contemplate progressing this.

(Cllrs Butler and Ciortan entered the meeting during this item.)

7 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

- a) Citizens Advice Bureau – Cllr Lambert had attended the AGM. Market House had benefitted from redecoration and new carpets. CAB welcomed donations of paperback books which were sold as a fund raiser for the Bureau.
- b) Thame Museum Trust – Cllr Matelot Green reported a number of exhibitions and talks were planned, more information could be found on the museum website and the electronic newsletter. The library is currently being revamped and new display cabinets installed. A Christmas social for members of the museum would take place on 12 December.
- c) Barns Centre – Cllr Butler reported the problem with the wall was still unresolved.
- d) 21st Century Thame – Cllr Fickling reported the website had been updated and was running well. A walk had taken place using the way marked trail around the town. The Food Festival event had benefitted from using the equipment pool. Applications were still being received for the shop front improvement grant.

8 Investments

The Committee noted the investment information which showed that the investments continued to perform well. A Treasury Management Policy will be drafted and presented to the committee before the next financial year.

9 Internal Audit

The Committee noted the First Interim Audit Report for 2012-13.

10 Graffiti Removal

Discussion took place around what was considered offensive or acceptable graffiti and who would make the judgment with common sense being the first reference point. Members agreed that graffiti was considered an acceptable part of Skate Park area and the policy should be amended to reflect that it should be left unless it was deemed offensive.

RESOLVED:

- i) To adopt the Removal of Graffiti Policy subject to the above amendment.*

11 Town Hall Refurbishment

There had been no success in obtaining grant funding for repairing the windows of the

Town Hall nor for carryout the building work identified in the report.

The refurbishment work was now considered essential but would be started until the Spring. Investigations would be made about securing loan from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB), and the district council's New Loan Scheme rather than depleting the Council's financial balances.

A report of the investigations would be presented at a future meeting for a decision.

12 Business Continuity

It was agreed that the Business Continuity Strategy was a good comprehensive document and should be adopted. Implementing the strategy required the procedures contained within it to be tested on a regular basis.

RESOLVED:

- i) To adopt the Business Continuity Strategy and the Business Continuity Action Plan as attached to the report.***

13 Grants Awards Policy

The Town Council's Grants Policy does not support revenue funding. This made the task for the Citizens' Advice Bureau difficult because it required financial support from the Council but found it difficult and sometimes fanciful trying to frame any allocation for funding into a capital application.

The CAB is in the process of restructuring its administration to provide a better and more efficient delivery of service and would benefit from having a more long term and clear commitment from the Council. Members recognised the importance of the services the CAB offered to the residents of Thame, particularly with the current financial constraints and extensive change in benefits.

The Committee did express a preference for trying to offer more of a long term commitment but required more information about the level of funding required. As an interim measure funding for the next 2 years would be earmarked through the grants budget and be recognised as revenue support, with future provision being decided and made through the revenue budget setting process based on an agreed figure.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Grant Awards budget would provide revenue funding for the CAB at a level to be agreed for the next two years.***
- ii) That proposals for long term revenue funding arrangements be brought to a future meeting of the Committee***

14 Scout Lease

There was full support for the 1st Thame Scout Group who provided opportunities to the youth of the town. The proposed changes to the lease as detailed in the report were not considered too onerous by the Committee and it was proposed that they should be made.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the term of the lease should be 25 years.*
- ii) That the amendments to clause 3.17.2 as detailed in the report be agreed.*

(Cllr Fickling left the meeting during this item.)

15 Thame Town Cricket Club

The Cricket Club had decided that the current facilities were in such a state of disrepair that in the interest of the Club and all of its members it had to try and find a way of providing a new building.

Working very closely with Cllr Welply the club were considering an application to the district council's Community Investment Fund.

Any such application would require planning permission and the Club wanted to inform Members at this very preliminary stage as a matter of courtesy, of its intentions before the plans were submitted. The Committee was pleased to hear plans were moving forward, the Cricket Club was an important part of the town.

The meeting concluded at 7.38pm

Signed
Chairman, 22 January 2013