

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 10 September 2013 at 8.00 pm

Present: *Councillors K. Baker (Chairman); P. Challis; J. Cheng; L. Hayward; C. Lawley; D. Mills; S. Outen; E. Rowland*

Officers present: *D. Mander, Town Clerk; K. Murray, Service Support Manager*

Apologies: *Councillor K. Haines,*

17. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mills	Agenda item 9 Bowling Club licence renewal	Prejudicial - Councillor Mills is a member of Woodley Bowling Club.
------------------	---	---

Councillor Mills was not present during the discussion and decision on this item.

Councillor Mills	Agenda item 10 Reading Road allotment site Lease rent review	Personal – Councillor Mills is a tenant at the site.
------------------	--	--

18. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JUNE 2013**

The Town Clerk provided copies of the minutes of the previous meeting showing the changes that had been made following the comments made at Full Council on 25 June. Under this item Councillor Rowland said that she and Councillor Challis, who had been signing the cheques while new signatories were awaiting the bank's approval, had not been informed by officers once the approval was in place. The Town Clerk reported that the Service Support Manager had responded by email to Councillor Rowland apologising for this oversight while she had been on leave.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting of 11 June 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

19. **FINANCE**

a) **Budgetary Control**

It was noted that several budget lines were higher than those of the previous year. The Town Clerk explained that some of these were the result of an increase in costs of annual payments, for example computer maintenance agreements. It was also noted that income relating to the Inn on the Park was lower following the rent review reduction from November 2012.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 24/13.

b) **Payments**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the following payments:

	Current account	Imprest account
May 2013	£152,047.29	£52,940.44
June 2013	£85,751.29	£61,686.56
July 2013	£78,248.79	£54,960.42

c) **Short term investments**

Under this item the Town Clerk reported that it was proving difficult to find other institutions that met the A rating required by the Council's Investment Strategy; many institutions with a suitable rating were not able to provide an interesting rate for short term investments from a body that did not have its main account with that institution. Councillor Rowland reported that Wokingham Borough Council and Berkshire Community Savings and Loans had been making such investments with Santander, which was AA rated. The Town Clerk agreed to follow this up.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the following investment of balances since the meeting of 11 June 2013:

Lloyds TSB High Interest Deposit account for a period of 6 months:
£250,000 on 25 June at an interest rate of 0.7%.

d) **Annual Financial Statements**

Members welcomed the information that officers would be investigating the provision of a different format of the financial statements for 2013/14. The Town Clerk explained that with there now being no requirement for the statements to be provided in the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (FRSSE) format she would be commissioning the Council's internal auditor to provide support to prepare the 2012/13 statements in this format; these would be required to be prepared for the 2013/14 statements. If the new format was workable she anticipated that the cost of preparing the statements would eventually be reduced. If the FRSSE format was required in future the Council would incur additional expense to revert back.

e) **Investments**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the sum of £5 received from Invesco Perpetual following a calculation error in 2008 be added to the Council's investment portfolio.
- ◆ To note that further returns from the Lifemark backed Keydata investment of between 12 and 15% of the bonds held are anticipated in October 2013, February 2014 and August 2014.

20. **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

The Chairman introduced the recommendation from the Leisure Services Committee held on 27 August 2013 that:

The Strategy and Resources Committee allocate £30,000 from the general reserve for the production of a detailed specification and the purchase and installation of an appropriate software management system for leisure and facilities bookings.

In addition the Leisure Services Committee had resolved that, if the above was agreed, a fully costed business plan would be provided to the Strategy and Resources Committee providing estimated savings and benefits that the software management system would bring to the Council.

Concerns were raised about allocating around 10 per cent of the Council's general reserve in the first instance to a project that may not directly serve the public and when the Council's lease on Bulmershe Leisure Centre would end in 2015 and its future was not yet known. The Chairman pointed out that the Leisure Services Committee had made it clear in its resolutions that a fully costed business plan would come to the Strategy and Resources

Committee and that the recommendation was to allocate and not spend without a plan being approved by the Committee. It was reported that all members at the Leisure Services Committee meeting had agreed that such a business plan be commissioned to inform the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Rowland and seconded by Councillor Challis that the motion be amended to propose that the Committee allocate £5,000 from the general reserves to commission a fully costed business plan that would be considered by both the Leisure Services and Strategy and Resources Committees.

This motion was put to the vote and, on the casting vote of the Chairman was not carried.

The recommendation from the Leisure Services Committee was then put to the vote and, on the casting vote of the Chairman, it was

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To allocate £30,000 from the general reserve for the production of a detailed specification and the purchase and installation of an appropriate software management system for leisure and facilities bookings.

21. **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Councillor Hayward, Chairman of the Community Services Committee, presented the recommendation from the meeting held on 3 September 2013, that:

The Strategy and Resources Committee allocate additional funding of £1,020 to the Community Services Committee's Amenities budget for the provision of a refuse amenity vehicle, once a month for three hours, at the Airfield Centre, Hurricane Way, from October 2013 to March 2014.

Councillor Hayward explained that the Committee had agreed that it wished to give a year's trial for an extra community refuse vehicle site at the Airfield Centre.

Members discussed this proposal. Some concern was expressed about having to pay for this service and it was noted that the proposed site and the existing two sites were all in Loddon ward and a long way from the other side of Woodley. During the discussion there was a suggestion that the back of Bulmershe Leisure Centre might be a better site and concerns were raised about the existing site a Drovers Way which was very busy and where it was believed there were some safety issues. Questions about the future of this provision were also raised and it was understood that this may come under review. With this in mind it was

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To defer a decision on the Community Services Committee's request for funding of £1,020 to fund an additional refuse amenity vehicle and to seek an indication from Wokingham Borough Council on the sustainability of this service.
- ◆ That this matter be further considered by the Community Services Committee once information is received from Wokingham Borough Council and that the Committee take into account the comments regarding the Drovers Way site and accessibility for residents.

22. **CATERING PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PANEL**

The Service Support Manager presented the reports of the meetings held on 5 July, 9 August and the tabled report of the meeting held the previous week on 6 September 2013. He explained that the panel had been considering the matter of a sheltered area at the front of the café for some time and had been investigating various options. At the last

meeting the panel had agreed that the best option was the installation of permanent parasols and, as there were no funds in the centre's budget for these items had, agreed to request funding from the Committee for this purpose.

Members considered the recommendation from the meeting of the 6 September 2013 that:

The Strategy and Resources Committee allocate £6,000 from the general reserve for the purchase and installation of permanent parasols at the front of the Oakwood Centre.

There was general support for this request. Officers agreed to keep in mind safety issues when selecting the best option and that any branding on the parasols be related to the Town Council.

RESOLVED:

To allocate £6,000 from the general reserve to purchase and install permanent parasols at the front of the Oakwood Centre.

23. **REVIEW OF WORKING PARTIES**

The Town Clerk presented Report No SR 28/13 which provided a review of the Committee's existing six working parties/panel and recommended that the Bar Management Working Party be terminated on the grounds that, apart from the dealing with the matter of the rent review, the working party had not met very often and liaison with LT Pub Leasing could be carried out by officers and reported to the committee when appropriate. It was noted that the matter of the end of the existing contract in October 2015 would need to be considered by the Committee in any case.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To terminate the Bar Management Working Party and that officers deal with the day to day operation of the contract, reporting to committee as required.

24. **BOWLING CLUB LICENCE RENEWAL**

The Town Clerk presented Report No SR 29/13 which provided information on the existing licence for the use of the green and the proposed terms for a further licence including an annual increase by the Retail Price Index on rent, terms for the club to allow other organisations to use the green, a charge for water use and that the licence end in 2021 when the lease in relation to the club house groundrent also comes to an end. Under this item Members also raised the Council's desire to remove the trees around the green and the Town Clerk said she believed that the club would be in favour of this. The Service Support Manager reported that he had received a lower than expected quote for this work as part of the work the Entrance Improvements Working Party was looking at. It was noted that this work was likely to require repairs to pathways around the green. The Town Clerk agreed to let the club know in writing that the Council intended to remove the trees.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That a new licence on terms set out in Report No SR 29/13 be granted to Woodley Bowling Club.

25. **READING ROAD ALLOTMENT SITE – RENT REVIEW**

The Town Clerk presented Report No SR 30/13. The ten year lease with Reading Borough Council included a rent review after 5 years. The proposed increase of £1,000 would mean an annual rent of £7,000 and was in line with the Retail Price Index increase over the last five years. It was noted that the Senior Valuer at Reading BC had suggested that a future lease include an agreed and relevant basis for any future rent reviews and Members agreed that this should form part of those negotiations.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the Town Clerk enter into negotiations with Reading Borough Council on the rent review sum proposed in relation to the allotment site at Reading Road.

26. **SECTION 106 DEVELOPERS CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No SR 31/13 and informed Members of £13,802 Section 106 funding that was available to the Council for play equipment at Malone Park. This would not fund a new play area but would be the opportunity to install new equipment. The Council would be consulting on the proposals and the Service Support Manager agreed to let Councillor Rowland know when this would take place.

Concern was expressed at the lack of response to the Council's applications for funding and the lack of explanation on Section 106 funding arrangements. In response to comments about various items and sections of the tables provided with the report the Service Support Manager agreed to make the necessary amendments. There was a view that some items be reviewed because they were not worthwhile pursuing. The Chairman suggested that Councillors feed any suggestions to the Service Support Manager as part of the review of the tables.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 31/13.

27. **2014/15 BUDGET**

The Chairman asked if Members had any suggestions for items to be included or excluded from next year's budget. Councillor Rowland responded with the following items which she would like to see in the 2014/15 budget:

- The continuation of funding to Just Around the Corner, ReadiBus and Keep Mobile
- Funding for some universal youth provision

28. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH, TOWN AND PARISH CONFERENCE**

The Chairman informed Members that this year's conference should be interesting. One of the topics would be the Community Infrastructure Levy and the impact that the new provisions would have on the ability of the Borough Council to provide the infrastructure required when it would have to allocate 15 or 25% of the levy to town and parish councils. There being no nominations from the Committee it was agreed that all Councillors be asked if they wished to attend.

29. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – CONSULTATION ON DECISION MAKING STRUCTURE**

Members discussed the consultation document from the Borough Council. In general there was a view that an executive system of decision making resulted in there being no broad input from members of other political parties or from back benchers with no special responsibility. There was a view that under the former committee system working relationships between the members of political parties had been better. Some Members questioned why town and parish councils were being consulted on this matter as this would not impact on them. If the intention was to improve liaison there was a view expressed that the Borough Council could do more to improve liaison between the two levels of council as other principal councils had done.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To respond to the consultation with the views expressed and request that the Council be informed of the outcome.

30. **NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To nominate Councillors Baker and Cheng to attend the NALC Larger Councils' Conference on Wednesday 27 November 2013 at the Royal National Hotel in London.

- ◆ To note the NALC media release regarding the data registration fees payable by town and parish councillors.

31. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

It was suggested that the matter of youth services in the town be discussed at a future meeting. The matter of the ongoing discussions regarding universal youth provision in the town was raised. This led to a discussion about the situation and the need for the Youth Working Party to bring forward some recommendations to the Committee. Councillor Rowland reported that the members of the working party had met ten days ago but that it felt that it was working in a vacuum because it didn't know the controlling Group's views on this matter. The Chairman believed that it was important that the working party establish what is needed, the evidence for that need, how that need could be satisfied and the options available for doing so. He advised the working party that it should address these matters and needed to make its recommendations by the end of September.

32. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

There were no items identified.

33. **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted in relation to legal matters, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw for the following two agenda items.

34. **OAKWOOD CENTRE FLOORING**

The Service Support Manager presented Report No 32/13. The matter of the claims in respect of the flooring at the Oakwood Centre was now concluded with a consent order for a payment of £20,000 by the Council to Hawkins Brown being signed on 28 August under powers assigned to the Town Clerk to protect the Council in cases of urgency.

Members were reminded that of the confidential nature of the terms of the former agreement with Collier and Catley.

Councillors Challis and Rowland expressed disappointment that both political parties had not been party to the decision, as had been the case previously, and that they had only become aware of this action on receipt of the agenda. The Town Clerk explained that holiday leave and only a short time to respond to the situation had meant that this unfortunately had been overlooked.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their work on what had been a long drawn out matter. He asked that a further public report be provided for the next meeting so that residents could understand what the flooring problems had been. This document would be circulated to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group. It was recognised that the document may have to be considered by the Council's solicitors before being published.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To Report No. SR 32/13.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm
