

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 16 September 2014 at 8.00 pm

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

Also present: *Councillor M. Holmes*

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

26. **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

27. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

28. **MINUTES OF THE STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 JUNE 2014**

Minute number 6

In reply to a question the Town Clerk reported that she was endeavouring to arrange a speaker to clarify the revised application process for section 106 grants before the next meeting of the full Council.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting of 10 June 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

29. **MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 AUGUST 2014**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting of 5 August 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

30. **FINANCE**

a) **Budgetary Control**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 27/14.

b) **Payments**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the following payments:

	Current account	Imprest account
May 2014	£186,338.92	£63,452.62
June 2014	£81,892.40	£61,250.45
July 2014	£163,352.26	£61,232.48
August 2014	£133,946.69	£61,457.10

31. **WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE – DEVELOPMENT**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. SR 28/14. Members were in agreement that the Council should look to develop activities and sports at the Centre and accepted the recommendations from the Leisure Services Committee.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the allocation of £3,500 from the special projects earmarked reserve in order to commission Alliance Leisure to provide an independent feasibility report on opportunities for development at Woodford Park Leisure Centre by Alliance Leisure.
- ◆ That members of the Leisure Services Committee be included in discussions with the consultants on potential development opportunities at the centre.

32. **3G ARTIFICIAL GRASS PITCH PROJECT**

Members noted that the planning application for the 3G artificial grass pitch project was submitted on 26 August 2014 and considered a proposal to allocate additional funds of £1,000 to enable a geotechnical survey to be undertaken, which was required as part of the scheme development. It was noted that the geotechnical survey would need to be carried out before the planning application was determined in order for the target completion date of September 2015 to be met, and there was an element of risk attached to this should planning permission not be granted.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To allocate an additional sum of £1,000 from the special projects earmarked reserve to enable a geotechnical survey to be carried out.

33. **BULMERSHE PARK**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. SR 29/14, which outlined an offer from Dominic Lawson Bespoke Planning Ltd made on behalf of their client for land at 34 Pitts Lane and to the rear of 36 – 50 Pitts Lane, which backs on to Bulmershe Park. This included the installation of paths, a sheltered seating area and sensory planting in Bulmershe Park and the provision of a contribution towards maintaining the garden landscape.

Members considered the proposal and supported the recommendation from the Leisure Services Committee that this be refused. Members agreed with the Leisure Services Committee that this area, part of the Site of Urban Landscape Value, should remain as an area of natural open space to support wildlife and for the enjoyment of residents, and that such a development may set a precedent that could lead to further erosion of the area in future. Members were also of the opinion that the developer's wish for residents of the proposed care home to be able to access a garden area should be catered for within the plans for the development.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To endorse the recommendation of the Leisure Services Committee to refuse the offer in respect of Bulmershe Park and to respond accordingly on behalf of the Council.

34. **OPENNESS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. SR 30/14, which included a draft protocol regarding members of the public wishing to report on meetings of Woodley Town Council.

Members discussed the report and made the following comments:

- The reporting protocol should refer to all meetings open to the public, and this did not include working parties.
- The protocol should advise members of the public to contact the Council if they wished to report on a meeting rather than imply this was a requirement.

- The protocol should make it clear that the Council's Wi-Fi service may be used if it was available.

Members suggested that officers identify suitable locations for members of public wishing to report on meetings, depending on the meeting venue.

It was agreed that the protocol was a good starting point and could be adapted and updated in the future as experience was gained.

With regard to the reporting of officer decisions it was noted that details of the methods of storage, referencing and accessibility of this information had not yet been finalised and a further report would be provided regarding this part of the regulations.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 30/14.

RECOMMENDED:

- ◆ That the draft protocol for members of the public wishing to report on meetings, as attached at **Appendix A**, be approved.

35. **BULMERSHE LEISURE CENTRE – UPDATE**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. SR 31/14.

The Town Clerk reported that all permanent staff members at Bulmershe Leisure Centre had now received a letter from the Town Council informing them of the transfer of the management of the centre and the process for the representation of staff through the TUPE process; and that the required meetings with the present and future employers had been arranged.

Members were informed that the decorations and repairs agreed as part of the negotiations were underway and that the legal agreements for the surrender of the leases on the leisure centre and the bungalow were being prepared, with the date of the transfer anticipated to be 1 November 2014.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the pool had to close on 3 and 4 September as a result of a suspected health and safety matter raised in a site survey commissioned by 1Life. This had now been deemed not to be a problem. Members thanked the Town Clerk and her team for acting swiftly to resolve this issue.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No SR 31/14.

36. **CATERING PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PANEL**

a) The Service Support Manager presented Report No. SR 32/14 of the Catering Partnership Management Panel meeting held on 13 July 2014 and Members noted the change in directors of the CIC. The Service Support Manager reported that the issue of visitors to the Centre who were regularly sitting in the café but not purchasing anything was being monitored.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 32/14.

b) The Service Support Manager presented Report No. SR 33/14 of the Catering Partnership Management Panel meeting held on 5 September 2014. Members were

pleased to note that the rent income had been above the target for the first four months of the current financial year.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. SR 33/14.

37. **PUBLIC TOILETS WORKING PARTY**

- a) Councillor Haines presented Report No. SR 34/14 of the Public Toilets Working Party meeting held on 20 June 2014, at which the allocation of £100,000 Section 106 funding had been confirmed.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No SR 34/14.

- b) Councillor Haines presented Report No. SR 35/14 of the Public Toilets Working Party meeting held on 21 August 2014, at which the returned tenders had been discussed and Danfo had been recommended as the preferred supplier.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No SR 35/14.

- ◆ To approve Danfo as the preferred supplier of a public toilet in the town centre.

- c) Councillor Haines presented Report No. SR 36/14 of an informal meeting regarding the public toilets held on 29 August 2014, at which discussions took place with Danfo and the consultant Chartered Surveyor regarding the possible locations and design of the proposed toilet, to enable Danfo to produce a design for each location.

Members discussed the way forward with this project and confirmed that the Committee would make the final decision on the location of the toilet based on the advantages and disadvantages of the potential sites once the working party had further investigated the sites and considered information from Danfo.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No SR 36/14.

38. **SECTION 106 PROJECT LIST**

The Service Support Manager reported on the Section 106 project list and informed Members that no new applications had been submitted or funding secured since the last meeting, but that the Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative was planning to submit an application for the refurbishment of the northern end of the town centre, with the assistance of the Council, as a partner organisation.

Members noted that some items had been on the list for as long as six years and there were many projects relating to Bulmershe Leisure Centre that were no longer valid. Members felt that a review of the project list should be undertaken and asked the Service Support Manager to report back with proposals for reviewing the list on a regular basis.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note that no new applications had been submitted or funding secured since the last meeting.
- ◆ To note that the Woodley Town Centre Management Initiative would be submitting an application for section 106 funds in respect of the refurbishment of the northern end of the town centre.

39. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH/PARISH COUNCIL WORKING GROUP**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the report of the meeting of the Borough/Parish Working Group held on 15 July 2014.

40. **CIVIC SPACE AND WAR MEMORIAL**

The Town Clerk gave an update on the remaining work to complete the civic space around the war memorial. The bonded gravel would soon be applied to the tarmac on the pathways and then the installation of the seats and planting would be undertaken. The new gates had been commissioned and were scheduled for installation before Armistice Day in November.

41. **WOODLEY BOWLING CLUB**

Councillor Mills declared a personal interest in this item as a member of the club and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Members considered a request from Woodley Bowling Club to erect a shed in the area around the bowling green and the recommendation from the Leisure Services Committee that the request be approved.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To grant permission to Woodley Bowling Club to erect a shed in the area around the bowling green.

42. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – SHAPING OUR NEW COMMUNITIES**

Members considered the Shaping Our New Communities consultation document published by Wokingham Borough Council and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To respond with no specific comments on the document, but request that Wokingham Borough Council also consider the situation in Woodley, where there are significant additional areas of housing being built within an existing community, and how these can be integrated into the community.

Under this item a question was asked about any progress on a neighbourhood plan. The Chairman explained that the Council was hoping to learn from the experiences of other councils before starting work on a neighbourhood plan and thereby avoid many of the possible pitfalls and unnecessary expense. He cited the situation at Shinfield where the process appeared to have lost some momentum and considerable costs had already been incurred.

43. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – STRATEGIC REVIEW OF ASSETS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note that Wokingham Borough Council is carrying out a review of public assets to enable the identification of opportunities for rationalisation, and maximisation of the use of assets, and the Town Clerk had met with officers to confirm and update information on Woodley's public assets.

44. **PRECEPT SUPPORT GRANT**

Members noted the report of a meeting between the Wokingham Borough Council Chief Executive, Councillors Haines and Rowland and Councillor Rampton, Chairman of WDALC, which took place on 25 July 2014.

The Town Councillors had expressed concern over the reduction in the precept support grant transferred to Woodley Town Council and the other parishes and the Wokingham Borough Council Chief Executive had recognised that that consultation with parishes could have been better. It had been agreed that consultation with parishes would be improved and that this could be addressed through the Borough/Parish Working Group, which provided a formal means of engaging with the parishes.

The Chairman asked that the Council ensure that the matter of the precept support grant be an agenda item for the next meeting of the Borough/Parish Working Group and the Town Clerk agreed to action this.

Members also agreed that the Town Clerk write to all the parishes in Wokingham Borough to seek their views on this matter.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the report on the meeting with the Wokingham Borough Council Chief Executive on 25 July 2014.
- ◆ To request that the next Borough/Parish Working Group agenda include an item on the precept support grant.
- ◆ To write to all the parishes in Wokingham Borough seeking their views on the precept support grant.

45. **2015/16 BUDGET**

The Chairman invited the committee to consider items to be included or excluded from the 2015/16 budget, which would be investigated and reported back to the committee.

There was one item suggested for inclusion:

- Replacement or maintenance of the Town Council's stock of street lights, which may be able to be undertaken by Wokingham Borough Council at a reduced cost as part of their own scheme to replace street lights with models that reduce light pollution and increase energy efficiency and would allow participation in the part-night street lighting scheme, which would reduce costs.

46. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No future agenda items were suggested.

47. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

It was agreed to publicise the progress of work to provide a public toilet in the town centre.

48. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted in relation to personal information, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press were temporarily excluded and asked to withdraw for the following agenda item.

49. **HMRC REVIEW**

The Town Clerk declared an interest in this item and was not present during the discussion of this item.

The Service Support Manager presented Report No. SR 37/14. Members discussed the matters contained in the report in relation to employment status, mileage payments and accommodation and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To pay the employee accommodation tax liability to 31 August as detailed in the report.
- ◆ That the contractual issues regarding mileage payments be referred to the Personnel Sub Committee for consideration and recommendation to the Committee.
- ◆ That the Town Clerk be reimbursed for sums already paid to HMRC, for which the Council is liable.
- ◆ That payments made to HMRC in respect of the sums due and agreed to be paid be allocated from the general reserve.

The meeting closed at 10:10pm

Woodley Town Council

Protocol for members of the public wishing to report on meetings of Woodley Town Council

Members of the public are entitled to report on Council meetings, including committees and sub committees that are open to the public.

Reporting means:

- Filming, photographing or making an audio recording of the proceedings of the meeting
- Using any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later
- Reporting or providing commentary on proceeding at a meeting, orally or in writing, so that the report or commentary is available as the meeting takes place or later if persons are not present at the meeting

Anyone present at a meeting as it takes place is not permitted to carry out an oral commentary or report. This is to prevent the business of the meeting being disrupted.

In order to assist members of the public who are attending a meeting and wish to report on that meeting it will be helpful if they contacted the Town Clerk on 0118 9690356 or email townclerk@woodley.gov.uk. This is so that employees can make arrangements for a suitable and defined place from which a report on proceedings can be done effectively before the start of the meeting.

Members of the public are asked to remain seated throughout the meeting because standing up and walking around could distract the meeting and therefore the business being conducted.

For meetings in the Oakwood Centre members of the public may use the Council's Wi-Fi facilities (if available) which can be accessed by selecting 'The Oakwood Centre' on your device. If the meeting is not held in the Oakwood Centre members of the public are asked to check in advance if a Wi-Fi service is available.

In order to avoid accidents the Council is unable to allow the use of electric plug sockets by members of the public for their equipment.