

HEREFORDCITY COUNCIL

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE 7th June 2016

Minutes of Meeting

Present : The Right Worshipful the Mayor and Councillors Tawn, Bushkes, Edwards, Wilcox, Boulter, Michael, Rone, Stevens, Griffiths and Dykes

In attendance : Councillor Lloyd-Hayes (not a member of the committee), Steve Kerry Town Clerk, Lesley Bruton Finance Officer

FP2016/17.11 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillor Kenyon proposed, and Councillor Bushkes seconded Councillor Stevens as Chairman. Councillor Wilcox proposed and Councillor Edwards seconded Councillor Tawn as Chairman.

On being put to the vote it was

Resolved that Councillor Stevens serve as Chairman of the Committee until the meeting following the annual meeting of Council in 2017.

Councillor Michael proposed and Councillor Boulter seconded Councillor Tawn as Vice Chairman. There being no other nominations it was

Resolved that Councillor Tawn serve as Vice Chairman until the meeting following the annual meeting of Council in 2017.

FP2016/17.12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

FP2016/17.13 SUBSTITUTIONS

None

FP2016/17.14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

FP2016/17.15 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

It was proposed by Councillor Tawn and seconded by Councillor Lloyd-Hayes and

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting of 19th April be accepted as a true record and signed accordingly by the Chairman.

FP2016/17.16 ACCOUNTS PAID

The Finance Officer presented summary of accounts paid since the last meeting and explained that members were welcome to ask questions of fact before the meeting if they wished to.

In answer to questions at the meeting it was confirmed that the payment for CCTV was a commitment made by Council for some years and the reason one Brian Hatton plaque is more expensive than the other is that all the carriage for both is on one invoice. The live feed for mayor-making is for guests who cannot be accommodated in the Council Chamber. This does not happen every year, it depends how many guests the incoming mayor has. The bill splits to £400 for the DVD and £200 for the live feed. The replacement cards shown were for a member who has distributed all of their cards.

FP2016/17.17 BANK RECONCILIATION

The Finance Officer presented reconciliations on all accounts. It was proposed by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Kenyon and

Resolved that the bank reconciliations be accepted.

FP2016/17.18 ANNUAL RETURN AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Finance Officer introduced the report of the annual return and statement of accounts and reminded the Committee that approval of this item is a matter reserved for full Council. The Committee is invited to make any recommendations it sees fit or to ask any questions arising from the accounts. In answer to a question it was confirmed that if the £179,214 in the carry forward reserve for the tourist information centre project is not needed for that purpose it can be reallocated by the committee to another project. The terms of any lease and the service level agreement with a provider will be matters for this committee to determine.

It was proposed by Councillor Tawn and seconded by Councillor Edwards and

Resolved that the Finance Officer be commended for a very clear report and that the annual return and statement of accounts be recommended for acceptance by Council.

FP2016/17.19 PUBLIC TOILET CLEANING CONTRACT

The Town Clerk introduced his report and described the process by which the contractor was appointed. He reported that although there had been a brief period when the usual cleaner was on holiday and the cover hadn't been very good this had been put right and generally the cleaning standard was in accordance with the Council's expectations. Larger firms had tendered far higher amounts than that charged by the local business currently being used by the Council and it was unlikely that re-tendering the contract would yield a saving. In answer to a question the Finance Officer confirmed that income from the toilet door charges was £1,583 last

year. There is no call-out arrangement for emergency cleaning for example after illegal drug use, although the cleaner has responded well to ad hoc requests when the council has been notified of a problem. It was also confirmed that fee is charged hourly so if a toilet is closed for a period such as when a lock is jammed by vandalism, we do see a reduction in cleaning charges. It was noted that the service is at a very low cost to the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Edwards, seconded by Councillor Bushkes and

Resolved that the existing contractor be awarded another year under the current terms and conditions

FP2016/17.20 TOWN HALL UPDATE

The Town Clerk gave a brief update of negotiations regarding the front desk, where under pressure from the City Council (and some of its own officers) Herefordshire Council had restored a partial custodian service, at least until the referendum as the desk was over-run with electoral registration enquiries. Further, talks would start very soon about the City Council providing a front desk person in return for a significant adjustment in service charges or a remittance from Herefordshire Council for support given to their services.

Councillor Edwards raised the possibility of the area currently being used as a temporary library being available for a tourist information centre and a lengthy discussion took place about this option.

It was noted that Herefordshire had suggested this as an option to fit alongside a City Council run reception facility, and that space could be made available when the main library re-opens. Re-opening is scheduled for October this year. With the progress on lease negotiations about the possible TIC site in St Peter's Street being slow, this might not be much later than we could open on that site. The site would be subject to rental, it would not be available free, so although there would be a saving, but this is not yet quantified. On the debit side, it was noted that the space is much smaller and there would be no room for anything more than a basic information hub, certainly no space for retailing local produce and goods as was planned for the larger venue. There are also many details about weekend opening and terms and conditions of occupation to be resolved.

After much discussion members felt they did not have enough information to make a definitive statement of preference for one site or the other, and that work should be undertaken to establish more details regarding a possible Town Hall based TIC before any irrevocable decisions were made regarding St Peter's Street. This would require a business plan for what activities could feasibly be run from a reduced site and how much value that would add to the tourist offer.

It was proposed by Councillor Bushkes, seconded by Councillor Edwards and

Resolved that :

The Committee authorises the Town Clerk and officers to explore in detail options for the operating of a reception service for the City Council from the ground floor, testing the possibilities of partial funding from Herefordshire Council and combining reception with other duties helpful to the Council.

The Committee authorises the Town Clerk and officers to explore in detail options for the better management of the Town Hall including the reception desk above, but extending to consideration of other day to day operational tasks as a lead tenant and the review the service charges and other financial implications.

Further action on the lease negotiations on 4 St Peter's Street be postponed while the possibility of setting up a tourist information centre within the Town Hall in the area currently used as a temporary library is fully investigated.

FP2016/17.21 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE UPDATE ON LEASE NEGOTIATIONS

The Town Clerk reported that he had submitted proposals to the solicitor acting for the Council concerning the use of an external partner to provide the TIC service and how this would be kept separate from the leasing of the premises. This appears to meet the landlord's agent's stated requirement to avoid sub-letting but no formal response had been received yet. In the light of the resolution on the previous item the Clerk would not progress this matter at the present time.

FP2016/17.22 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

First quarter financial report (next meeting)

Future of citizens' advice services (possibly for next meeting)

Devolution of services by Herefordshire Council (as information becomes available)

Funding for CCTV (possibly by presentation to Council by the new Police and Crime Commissioner if he is available)

Support for the cycle track project (in so far as it concerns F+P Cttee to release reserves, the main decisions on this project fall to Community Development Committee).

FP2016.17.23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

26th July 2016 at 6.15 pm

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.40 pm

Signed

Date