**HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL**

**FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING**

**27th JANUARY 2015**

**Present:**  Councillors Boulter, Chappell, Chave, Edwards, Michael, Oliver and Tawn.

**Not in attendance**: Councillor Kay

**Attending:** Lesley Bruton (Finance Officer)

**F2014/15.81 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Toon and Councillor Wilcox.

**F2014/15.82 SUBSTITUTIONS**

None

**F2014/15.83 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Chave declared an interest under the Herefordshire Code of Conduct pursuant to the Localism Act 2011 in respect of item 6 – Destination Advertising in Partnership. Councillor Chave declared a non-pecuniary interest as Chair of the Hereford City Tourism Group.

**F2014.15.84 MINUTES**

Councillor Chappell proposed, Councillor Tawn seconded and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED:**

**The minutes of the meeting held on 16th December 2014 were approved as a true and accurate record. The minutes were signed accordingly by the Chairman.**

**F2014/15.85 BELGIAN FLAG**

The Chair, Councillor Edwards introduced the report with a brief history of the Belgian flag displayed in the Council Chamber and referred to the presentation by Mr. Dove, a local citizen who is a descendent of one of the Belgian refugees.

Councillor Edwards confirmed that following discussions with the Council, Mr. Dove had provided a replica flag at his own expense. The Chair then detailed the requirement for displaying the new flag and the potential cost of restoration of the old flag, which is approaching 100 years old.

Members raised their concerns over the cost of displaying the new flag and the substantial cost of restoring the old flag. The Chair stated that it was previously agreed to try and restore the flag. However due to the age of the flag it may not possible and it was agreed a replacement flag would be provided by Mr. Dove. Approval would need to be requested from Herefordshire Council to hang the flag together with a plaque.

Councillor Chave felt that there was merit in displaying the replica flag. However, Councillor Chave felt that due to the nature of the fabric of the flag that specialist advice should be sought on the conservation of the flag.

Councillor Chappell also raised concerns whether other similar projects may arise over the next four years and would also apply for funding from the City Council. Councillor Chappell agreed that conservation advice should be sought before agreeing to proceed with the restoration of the old flag.

The following amendments to the recommendations were proposed by Councillor Chave and seconded by Councillor Chappell:

3.1 That the Committee approves the expenditure of up to £1,000 for the display of the replica flag following advice on the appropriate conservation of the flags.

3.2 That the restoration of the original flag be deferred until specialist conversation advice has been sought on the conservation of the flags.

The above amendment was put to that vote and agreed unanimously.

It was proposed by Councillor Chave and seconded by Councillor Chappell and unanimously

**RESOLVED:**

* **That expenditure of up to £1,000 was approved for the display of the replica flag following advice on the appropriate conservation of the flags.**
* **The restoration of original flag is deferred until specialist conservation advice has been sought on the conversation of the flags.**

**F2014/15.86 DESTINATION ADVERTISING IN PARTNERSHIP**

Councillor Chave declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item due to the position Councillor Chave holds on the City Tourism Group.

The Chair, Councillor Edwards introduced the Town Clerk’s report and described how essentially the City Council could promote Hereford as a destination at key railway stations.

Councillor Chave felt that this must be done in co-ordination with the Hereford Business Improvement District (BID), Visit Herefordshire and the Hereford Tourism Group. Councillor Chave stated that this was the only way forward and the City Council should not work in isolation on this project. Councillor Chave recommended that Visit Herefordshire and the Hereford BID would need to take the lead on this project.

Councillor Chave proposed the following amendment to recommendation 3.2:

That officers’ of the Council be authorised to approach Hereford BID, Visit Herefordshire, the Hereford City Tourism Group and other potentially interested parties to develop a strategy for destination advertising and promotion at railway sites which reflects the retail, catering and cultural attractions of Hereford.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Tawn and agreed unanimously.

Councillor Tawn thought that there may be other businesses who would be interested in making a contribution towards this project and officers should ensure this is not restricted.

Councillor Chappell suggested that consideration should also be given to advertising in airports for example Birmingham, Cardiff and Bristol.

Councillor Tawn stated that the BID would be looking into this area and this one reason why the BID has been put forward to help market Hereford as a destination. However, Councillor Tawn stated that the BID has not been approved yet and will require 50% of businesses to be on board.

Councillor Edwards requested that this project must be kept up to date and thought out very carefully to ensure material is reviewed regularly.

Concerns were raised by Councillor Oliver on what would be promoted and he felt that the only tourist attraction Hereford has to offer is the cathedral.

Councillor Chave replied that the city has more cultural facilities available and would be happy to accept Visit Herefordshire expertise in this area.

Councillor Edwards thought it was a shame that the assets in the vaults are not on display and visitors cannot readily visit the City’s artefacts dating back to 12th Century.

It was proposed by Councillor Tawn, seconded by Councillor Oliver and was unanimously

**RESOLVED:**

* **That the Committee agreed to provide support to local tourist businesses and free attractions through promoting Hereford as a destination and to be a continuing priority for the Council.**
* **That officers of the Council are authorised to approach Hereford BID, Visit Herefordshire, the Hereford City Tourism Group and other potentially interested parties to develop a strategy for destination advertising and promotion at railway sites which reflect the retail, catering and cultural attractions of Hereford.**
* **That when the level of interest and possible investment in this project from other parties is known, that proposals for financial contributions from the City Council are brought back to the Finance and Policy Committee.**

 **F2014/15.87 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT QUARTER ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2014.**

The Finance Officer presented the report and highlighted that the report was only a further two months on from the previous report and that there were very little changes to be identified.

Councillor Michael queried the budget for Dial-a-Ride. The Finance Officer replied that the budget was agreed to support the mini bus service.

Councillor Oliver raised his concerns over the projected under spend in the budget. The Finance Officer stated that this had been raised within the report with detailed explanations.

Councillor Oliver was concerned that this had not been raised when setting next year’s precept. Councillor Edwards stated that there would be a new Council next year and that would be the time to decide how this Council would move forward. Councillor Tawn agreed with Councillor Edwards comment and reiterated the importance of the election year. Councillor Tawn reminded the Committee that there were no guarantees that the Council would receive the Local Council Tax Support Grant in future years and that this was considered in detail during the budget setting process. The decision to keep the precept at a similar level was agreed due to the uncertainty of the grant.

Councillor Edwards added that further services may also have to be funded by the City Council rather than Herefordshire Council in future years.

It was proposed by Councillor Michael, seconded by Councillor Chappell and agreed unanimously

**RESOLVED:**

* **That the Committee notes the contents of the report.**
* **That the Committee notes the expenditure to 31st December 2014.**
* **That the Committee notes the forecasted over and under spends and endorse the actions proposed to account for the variations.**

**F2014/15.88 ACCOUNTS PAID**

The Finance Officer presented the schedule of items paid since the last meeting and confirmed that no notice of questions had been received.

Councillor Chave apologised for not sending a request but queried why two cheques had been raised for United in the Community of £3,000. The Finance Officer confirmed that the cheques were for a community grant award. Unfortunately the original cheque had been ‘lost in the post’ and had subsequently been replaced. The Finance Officer confirmed that the original cheque had not been cashed and had been cancelled with the bank.

Councillor Chave queried whether the given the demise of Hereford United Football Club, whether the organisation was associated with the football club. Councillor Edwards stated that the organisation provide youth football training and is a separate organisation to Hereford United Football Club. Councillor Edwards requested that a copy of the organisations grant completion form be presented to the Finance and Policy Committee as well as the Community Development Committee.

The scheduled was accepted and duly authorised by the Chair.

**F2014/15.89 BANK RECONCILIATIONS**

The Finance Officer presented the bank reconciliation for December 2014. In answer to a query about an outstanding cheque from August the Finance Officer confirmed the cheque would be cancelled after 6 months.

 The reconciliations were noted.

**F2014/15.90 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

The following items were agreed for future meetings:

* Loans
* Lengthsman Scheme – Progress to date
* Relationship with BID
* Grant Completion Form – United in the Community
* Herefordshire Council – Councillor Edwards request for longer term planning of service provision.

**F2014/15.91 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

 17th March 2015 at 6 pm

Meeting closed at 6.50pm

Signed..........................................

Date.................................................