

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 22nd September 2020

MINUTES OF MEETING

This meeting took place under the provisions of the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 Sections Four and Five

Present : The Mayor Councillor Kath Hey, Councillor Jim Kenyon (Chair), and Councillors Aubrey Oliver, Kevin Tillet, Paul Stevens, Ange Tyler, Elizabeth Foxton and Brian Wilcox. Councillor Cat Hornsey joined the meeting at 6.20 pm

In attendance : Steve Kerry Town Clerk, Tracy Morriss Deputy Town Clerk

CD2020/21.39 CONFIRMATION THAT ALL MEMBERS CAN PARTICIPATE

At the start of the meeting the Chair confirmed that all members could see and hear the proceedings. It was noted that Councillor Oliver could see and hear, but that he could be heard but not seen by the rest of the meeting. Councillor Oliver thus voted by stating for, abstain or against as appropriate throughout the meeting.

CD2020/21.40 CONFIRMATION OF PUBLIC ACCESS

The Deputy Clerk confirmed that the meeting was being live streamed and recorded.

CD2020/21.41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Boulter and Powell.

CD2020/21.42 SUBSTITUTIONS

None

CD2020/21.43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Kenyon announced a declaration of a Schedule 2 (non-pecuniary) interest in item 13 on the agenda, support for Hinton Community Centre, as he is the Chair of the Trustees. As this would require Councillor Kenyon to leave the meeting, and the Vice Chair had given her apologies, Councillor Kenyon asked Councillor Tillet if he would take over the chairing for that item. This was agreed by the meeting.

CD2020/21.44 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

It was proposed by Councillor Tyler, seconded by Councillor Foxton and

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meetings of 7th July and 20th July 2020 be agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

CD2020/21.45 COUNTRY PARK SUPPORTERS – SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The Deputy Clerk advised the meeting that the Country Park Supporters (CPS) had submitted their information and reports and asked for a five year service level agreement to carry on with their work. It was confirmed in answer to a question from a member that the recent payment was for the third and final year of the existing agreement; this was a new application for a five year agreement starting in April 2021.

In discussion, members noted that they had asked for evidence of work towards the CPS becoming self financing. Although it was acknowledged that this would not have been possible this year, with so many restrictions on events, it was a disappointment that in the five year plan there was no programme for fund raising and a dependence on grants. The Deputy Clerk added that in her discussions with the CPS they did have a plan for fund raising at an early stage of development, but it was not included in the documents as it was not complete. Members generally commented that they wished to continue to support the work of the CPS but not necessarily for as long as the proposed agreement, especially in the light of current uncertainties. In addition it was noted that there are plans to relocate Growing Local which might change the nature of the relationship with the Council as well as offering an external revenue stream to the CPS. This was another point in favour of a shorter agreement.

Finally, it was noted that if it had been known that members were minded to propose a shorter agreement, it would have been helpful to have invited the CPS to the meeting, but this point had not been previously raised.

It was proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by Councillor Stevens and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Country Park Supporters receive a service level agreement for two years, with funding of £2,000 pa.

CD2020/21.46 BENCHES AND NOTICE BOARDS

The Clerk reminded members that they had in the past given delegated authority to him to purchase new benches and notice boards from two named suppliers, one in Dunfermline and one in Lincoln. Now the Council had resolved to support the Preston model of local procurement it was appropriate to reconsider this position. A local supplier had been found for benches, the Fownhope Forge at a competitive rate and it was therefore suggested that the supply is sought for them in future. The notice boards are a bespoke design so if we did switch suppliers there might be a slight difference in the design.

In discussion it was suggested that we could run some sort of restricted list inviting local suppliers to offer prices for their work, possibly not a formal tender as such, depending on the detailed rules on local authority procurement and how they affect a restriction based on location. It was also noted that the historic prices to beat are around £2,320 for a notice board and £750 for a bench.

It was commented by a number of members that localising procurement was good practice both environmentally and to support the local economy.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Clerk is authorised to advertise or otherwise compare prices for benches and notice board from local suppliers and purchase for the best available supplier within the Preston model of local procurement.

CD2020/21.47 GRANTS WORKING PARTY

Councillor Kenyon apologised that he had not been able to attend this meeting and thanked the officers and Councillor Milln for continuing and producing recommendations.

Regarding the recommendation for an emergency provision for grants or other payments to be made by the Committee up to £5,000 it was noted that this would mean the payments

would come from the grants budget which is under the Committee's control. If those payments were made as set out in the report, but by Council, then the same Council meeting could decide whether to use another budget or to authorise the deployment of reserves. This would be a more streamlined process than for the Committee to make the payments and then have to seek a virement of funds to restore the grants budget. There were no objections or challenges to the other proposals in the report suggesting improved internal publicity through social media or that the Committee could recommend exceptional awards outside the criteria to Council but not act outside the grants criteria itself. It was noted that accepting recommendation 7.1 on its own would give the effect of creating an emergency provision, but as Council already has the power to authorise payment it would not be necessary to proceed with recommendation 7.2 if the Committee was not to be given any additional powers in this regard.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Tyler and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Clerk draws up an amendment to the Standing Orders to allow for the declaration of a civic or community emergency by the Council in the shortest possible time given the legal requirements for agenda despatch.

CD2020/21.48 COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT

The Deputy Clerk introduced the report and updated the meeting with news of a meeting with voluntary groups on Thursday 17th September, notes of which would be forwarded. A further community groups meeting would be taking place shortly. The project addresses areas of need in the community, the nature and capacity of the voluntary sector response, training and support for groups and signposting to the best available source of assistance in a range of situations. The project is being run by Herefordshire Council across the county with HVOSS; the City Council are taking a leading role in the application of the project to the City itself.

Members expressed appreciation of the project so far and continuing interest in its progress.

The report was noted.

CD2020/21.49 CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY WORKING PARTY

Before the report was formally introduced, Councillor Stevens raised the issue of there not being an accompanying officer report to the member's proposals, the length of the document and the level of detail regarding what was a local initiative for the Council to consider and what were matters outside the Council's scope to deliver.

The Chair indicated that at this stage discussion would be solely on whether to defer the report and not on the detail of its contents, unless members decided to carry on with the agenda item.

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Wilcox and unanimously

RESOLVED To defer consideration of this item and to await an officer report on proposals specific to the work of the City Council.

CD2020/21.50 HIGH TOWN REGENERATION AND STRONGER TOWNS BOARD

The Mayor explained that High Town regeneration is in the purview of the Herefordshire Council Cabinet Member Cllr Tyler, she was the Council's representative on the Stronger Towns Board, with Councillor Stevens, the BID Chair representing them. There are fifteen

Board members tasked with coming up with a plan to bid for a share of £25m, by the end of January. The Board's area of consideration is not just the city parish, it includes the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone and Belmont Rural Parish. Rose Regeneration have been appointed to organise community consultation and their officer Christian Dangerfield has been invited to address an Extraordinary Meeting of Council on the 29th September, at which it would also be proposed to appoint a working group of members to get on with the specification for possible bid items. It was noted that the Golden Post area is listed among the most deprived parts of the country on the economic indices and it was important that the bid reflects this, as well as projects for the city centre, enterprise zone and others.

The report was noted.

CD2020/21.51 HINTON COMMUNITY CENTRE

At this point, having declared a Schedule 2 interest Cllr Kenyon left the meeting and Cllr Tillett took over as Chair.

The Clerk explained that when the Committee resolved to support the Hinton Community Centre it was agreed there would be a report after six months, which had now taken place. Since the original agreement much of what had been planned had been affected by the Covid 19 outbreak. The Centre had seen many of its regular activities cancelled under the restrictions, but had remained open and become a centre for patients with breathing difficulties not associated with Covid 19. This enabled people to continue to receive support for various conditions without the risks involved in bringing into a unit in the hospital which was coping with Covid 19 patients. The Centre had also been able to re-open outdoor boxing and martial arts clubs and a project to encourage young people to eat well and stay fit. The latest initiative was a job club, again mainly focussing on youth.

In discussion several members spoke of their appreciation of the work being done at the Centre and for the flexibility and adaptability of the Centre Manager, who is funded by the Council under the support agreed six months ago. The Mayor spoke of her recent visit and the respect and admiration she had encountered for the work from the youngsters at the boxing club and the doctors at the NHS clinic. It was noted that many of the groups using the Centre do so free of charge as they are not in a position to pay room hire fees, in contrast to practice at other community centres which as a result have an income stream to fund staffing costs.

The comparison was made with other community centres who might also have appreciated some assistance. It was clarified that this support was agreed in response to a specific request brought to the committee by the trustees at Hinton some months ago. If other centres made similar applications for assistance they could be considered, but that did not preclude further consideration of this one.

It was noted that the Centre Manager is employed part-time at a cost of around £15,000 in a full year to the Council, but that he also puts in a lot of voluntary time at the Centre.

The trustees had not been able in the disrupted year so far to prepare a plan for a self-financing Centre and have asked that in the circumstances the Council consider at this meeting extending the support for another twelve months, making twenty four months in total. The Clerk clarified that if this was agreed it would be referred to the Governance and Procedures Committee to consider a proposal to extend the current temporary employment contract to the maximum of twenty four months to provide continuity of service delivery. The decision of

the Committee tonight was whether to continue to support by providing the salary of the Centre Manager, and on what terms in respect of reporting and future planning.

After a detailed discussion it was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Wilcox and with one abstention

RESOLVED

That the Council continues to support that Hinton Community Centre by providing funding for a part-time Centre Manager on the current terms for a maximum of twenty four months terminating in March 2021.

That six monthly reports on the activity of the Centre continues to come to this committee.

That the Clerk indicate to the Trustees that the Committee expects to see a report on how they intend to raise revenue to fund the Centre's running costs after March 2021.

CD2020/21.52 CYCLE TRACK PROJECT

Councillor Kenyon returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

The Chair reported that £250,000 has been secured for this project and another £500,000 is being discussed between British Cycling and HALO. The latter is now with solicitors and until the details were resolved he cannot give any further information. Once that funding issue is resolved detailed planning permissions will be sought so that work can begin.

The report was noted.

CD2020/21.53 MAINTENANCE OF PARKS AND OPEN SPACES INCLUDING TREE MAINTENANCE, SHRUB CLEARANCE AND OTHER WORKS

The Chair introduced this item and explained that at the moment it was necessary for lots of small items that used to be covered by ward budgets to be brought to Committee. This was, in his view an unnecessary delay as the Clerk should be enabled to issue purchase orders for items up to £3,000, using local contractors for such items as ground clearance, tree works and repairs to enable parks to be used for the maximum benefit of all.

In the absence of a written report, members sought clarification on a number of points. The Clerk suggested that this applies to parks only, as "open spaces" was a very broad term and would not give him a clear mandate. He also stated that Herefordshire Council are only able to fund urgent safety works such as removing damaged equipment, cutting off projecting metal and filling the consequent holes. They do not repair or replace. Whenever approached to fund any works that might be considered Herefordshire Council's responsibility he always tests the argument that these are not safety related and if successful is able to push the request back to Herefordshire Council.

It was noted that the City Council has been funding park improvements for many years including disability access swings on two sites and a comprehensive programme of replacing and enhancing play equipment. Members also confirmed that their requests to get jobs done that were not urgent such as removal of damaged equipment had met with a negative response from the principal authority's contractors on the grounds that there is only budget for emergency safety works.

There are three local contractors who have done works for the City Council in parks or on the allotments recently, and these will be the obvious people to approach for quotes, one is a specialist tree surgeon. Some consideration was given to limiting the works to one item per park per year, or possibly by ward. It was noted that some parks are very large, others much smaller and some wards have no parks, some have two. No proposal was formally put regarding any restrictions of this nature.

The Clerk suggested it would be helpful if he drew up a list of the kind of works that might be covered under such a delegated authority in future. He also confirmed that the Parks and Open Spaces budget has stood at £38,000 for the last two years. Last year only £8,000 was spent, this year it stands at £16,800 spend, but some of that was related to a disability swing ordered in the previous year but paid in the current one. There is a history of this budget being under spent.

It was then proposed by Councillor Kenyon, seconded by the Mayor and unanimously

RESOLVED That the Clerk be given delegated authority to order works up to £3,000 in value from the parks and open spaces budget for items in parks such as tree maintenance, ground clearance or repairs.

CD2020/21.54 HEREFORD AND WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Clerk reported that this had been circulated and would take a great deal of time to work through in Committee. He would reply based on established Council decisions such as our strong preference for a permanently staffed fire station to be maintained in the City, and any other comments members wished him to make. It was also noted that the Mayor is on the Joint Authority Committee which oversees the Fire and Rescue Service as a county delegate, that the Chief Fire Officer will soon be retiring and that the proposed merger of control under the Police and Crime Commissioner is not proceeding.

The Chair invited members to send any specific responses they wanted to be included to the Clerk.

CD2020/21.55 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Seagull Contract (noting the change in position by DEFRA and the unwelcome consequences for the City)

Stronger Towns Board update

Parks and Open Spaces

There being no other businesses the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.25 pm and thanked all members for their contributions.

Signed

Date