

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 9th November 2021

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Paul Stevens (Chair) and Councillors Andrews, Boulter, Dykes, Hey, Hornsey, Oliver, Tillett, Toynbee and Williams

Attending Steve Kerry, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

PR2021/22.46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Brian Wilcox

PR2021/22.47 SUBSTITUTIONS

None

PR2021/22.48 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Stevens declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 on the agenda (BID Christmas Entertainment) as Chair of the BID which is a non-stipendiary role. He would answer questions on matters of fact, but would abstain from the debate and would not vote on the matter.

PR2021/22.49 MINUTES

After noting some typographical corrections which had been made since the draft minutes were circulated, and noting that Councillor Williams was recorded as arriving part way through the meeting and had converted his apologies to ones for lateness, it was proposed by Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Oliver and (with the abstention of two members who had not been present for the whole meeting)

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of 12th October (including the confidential minutes) be accepted as an accurate record and be signed accordingly by the Chair.

PR2021/22.50 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

The Chair thanked those members who had raised issues before the meeting to enable answers to be found. The email clarifying the payment shown as Skate Park rent had confirmed that this was for peppercorn ground rents for two skate parks, but also included substantial payments for other matters to Herefordshire Council and was in order. Likewise, the apparent high cost of elections was because one payment covered both by-elections, the variation was based on the size of the electoral roll and the actual turn-out which affected the bill.

In addition, Councillor Oliver raised a concern about the environmental impact of Cloud storage and the electricity needed to power the systems. This may be a matter for Climate and Biodiversity Committee to look into further.

The schedule of payments made in September 2021 was noted.

PR2021/22.51 BANK RECONCILIATIONS

There being no questions, the bank reconciliations for all accounts up to 31st September 2021 were noted.

PR2021/22.52 BID CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENT

The Clerk explained that the report was circulated late as we were waiting for details of the programme which is a work in progress. The Chair added that there had been a decision to hire a stage which is stated as a possibility in the report, this would cost around £6,000. It was clarified that there was some overlap between the days of live music and the days of street entertainment. The reason there is no big switch on event for the lights this year was that we would have had to have committed to that in February at the latest and at that time there was much uncertainty about what might be possible it would have been extremely risky to proceed. Committee had decided not to do so. In order to keep static crowds down the BID had gone for walking entertainment throughout the shopping area not just a static show in High Town. The publicity for the live music would be low key and large crowds were not expected. Events were taking place both in the day time and the early evening. Finally, it was noted that the City Council's contribution to costs would be reflected in the publicity from the BID.

It was proposed by Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Hornsey and (with two abstentions including the Chair)

RESOLVED That the City Council supports the BID Christmas entertainment programme with a donation of £5,000 drawn from the City Events budget.

PR2021/22.53 MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

The Clerk introduced the update report and added that since it was written he had become aware of a successful project in Kidderminster which involves a civic trust for which the new parish council is part, and an arts based restoration project for their town hall. This has resonance with the unsuccessful Stronger Towns bid we put forward for the Town Hall ground floor arts exhibition area and he had followed it up. In the next few weeks he hoped that members of the working group would be able to visit and see what had been done and talk to the officers and members who had brought it to fruition.

It was also noted that there would be merit in renewing contact with Leominster Town Council to see how the Priory issues had been resolved.

Finally it was noted that the recent appointment of an External Funding and Community Support Officer was timely in enabling the City Council to seek funding for a renewed initiative at the Town Hall.

PR2021/22.54 INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Clerk introduced the report and explained that given the need for extreme caution with investments the options open to the Council were quite limited.

Councillor Oliver asked if there was any information about CCLA's ethical and environmental investment policies. The Clerk confirmed that this could be an item for a future meeting and Councillor Andrews said that the Municipal Charities had looked into this and had been sent

a speaker by CCLA. The Clerk will seek to facilitate this at a future meeting as members felt this was an important area to be reviewed.

It was then proposed by Councillor Oliver, seconded by Councillor Andrews and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommends the current strategy, with the amendments to the specified investment and to the amount invested in the long term investment, to Council for re-adoption.

That before Council considers the matter the Committee should review the ethical and environmental investment policies of CCLA and invite a speaker to a future meeting.

PR2021/22.55 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

The Clerk presented the report and accompanying notes on significant variances from budget. It was noted that although there had been no spending on voluntary sector training this year the recommendation that this be deleted from future budgets would not now go forward as the recent appointment of an officer to work with voluntary groups would enable this work to be restored and there would be a need for this budget going forward.

In other queries it was confirmed that paragraph 5.2 refers to the changing public art exhibited at the Skate Park. Paragraph 2.8 referring to subscriptions did include a small subscription to HVOSS. There was no particular need for the Council to be a member of HVOSS and it was open to members to agree financial support through a grant or a service level agreement rather than through subscription which would come from other budgets. On paragraph 2.7 it was noted that although we have restored face to face meetings of council and its committees we still use zoom a lot and it is worth keeping our registration. This supports both home working and a large number of online meetings through the week.

The Committee noted the report.

PR2021/22.56 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Hey, and seconded by Councillor Andrews and unanimously

RESOLVED That to enable the discussion of confidential matters pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2), the press and public be excluded from the meeting and the matters discussed be treated as confidential.

PR2021/22.57 WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND HOURS IN THE MAYORAL SUPPORT TEAM

After confidential discussion the hours allocated to two posts and the working arrangements between them were resolved.

PR2021/22.58 READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Tillett and unanimously

RESOLVED That the press and public be readmitted.

PR2021/22.59 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Annual budget and precept recommendations to Council (next meeting)

CCLA ethical and environmental investment policies

Cloud-based phone systems

Environmental impact of cloud-based information storage systems (possible reference to Climate and Biodiversity Committee)

PR2021/22.60 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 11th January 2022 at 6 pm

Signed

Date