

FINANCE, ASSET & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held in Ellesmere Town Hall on Monday 6th August, 2018 at 11.00am.

PRESENT: Councillors: R Hartley (Chair), G Elner, D Lunn, Mrs E Peers, I Ward and Mrs J Williams
Mandy Evans – Town Clerk
Phil Smith – Assistant Clerk

FAR-1/18 Election of Chair

It was moved by Cllr G Elner, seconded by Cllr Mrs E Peers and

RESOLVED – that Cllr R Hartley be elected as Chair of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year.

FAR-2/18 Election of Vice-Chair

It was moved by Cllr Mrs E Peers, seconded by Cllr G Elner and

RESOLVED – that Cllr Mrs J Williams be elected as Vice-Chair of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee for the 2018/19 municipal year.

FAR-3/18 To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence.

RESOLVED - that apologies received from Cllrs P Goulbourne – medical appointment – and Mrs A Wignall – holiday - be approved.

FAR-4/18 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda

None.

FAR-5/18 Grant Dispersations

None received.

FAR-6/18 Public Question Time

No questions had been received and no members of the public were present.

FAR-7/18 Minutes

It was moved by Councillor Mrs E Peers, seconded by Councillor Mrs J Williams and

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2018 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

FAR-8/18

Shropshire Council Review of Discretionary Business Rates Relief

The Town Clerk reported that Shropshire Council were currently consulting on proposed changes to its policy on discretionary business rates relief, which had previously been circulated.

During discussion of the proposals, reference was made to the proposal to amend the qualifying criteria for social enterprises/community interest companies that are non-profit making, and that this be applied fairly in order not to disadvantage certain organisations.

FAR-9/18

Speed Sign – Elson Road

Further to the request made at the 4 June Town Council meeting, the Town Clerk reported that Shropshire Council Highways had offered to re-locate an existing Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) to a site on Elson Road. The total cost to re-locate the existing VAS unit to a site on Elson Road and to supply/install a new solar panel kit to power the VAS would be £1050. As previously reported, Shropshire Council did not have any funding available for speed reduction measures on Elson Road, and therefore the cost for the VAS sign would need to be met by the Town Council. Once the VAS unit had been relocated to Elson Road, it would be left there permanently, so would be a cheaper way of providing a VAS for this location rather than installing a brand new unit (approx. £3500).

Members felt this was a cost-effective alternative, given that the Safer Roads Partnership had indicated that it was not able to employ mobile speed cameras along Elson Road. The Town Clerk advised that the cost could be met from within existing budgets. There was a discussion as to the best location for the sign, with the preferred site being in-bound to the Town close to the junction with the Hawthornes. The Town Clerk stated that she would seek the advice of Shropshire Council Highways about the most suitable location, and notify Members accordingly.

RESOLVED - that the re-location of an existing Vehicle Activated Sign to a site (to be confirmed) on Elson Road, Ellesmere at a cost of £1050 be approved.

FAR-10/18

Freedom of Information Requests

The Town Clerk reported that two FoI requests had recently been received from the same organisation, but neither was relevant to the Town Council.

FAR-11/18

Street Lighting - Use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funding

The Town Clerk reported that Shropshire Council's Internal Infrastructure Group had considered the Town Council's Expression of Interest application for CIL funding to support the conversion of the Council's street lights to LED lanterns. It had been concluded that funding the upgrading of street lighting was not considered to be an appropriate use of CIL funding, as it was not considered to be infrastructure that supported development that had taken place or will take place in the future in accordance with the guidance.

Members expressed disappointment with the decision, and the view that improving street lighting was not seen as a community benefit. It was felt that

the scheme would support future housing development in the town. It was also suggested that further clarification be sought from Shropshire Council regarding the criteria they used for assessing applications for CIL money. It was noted that the CIL Policy was being reviewed, and representations should be made that the use of CIL money must be linked to community priorities.

RESOLVED – that Shropshire Council be asked to provide clarification of the current criteria used for assessing applications for CIL funding, and that further representations be made to ask for the decision not to support the street lighting upgrade to be re-considered.

FAR-12/18

Town Hall Entrance/Lobby

The Town Clerk reported that following further representations to Shropshire Council regarding the allocation of Section 106 Public Realm funding to this project, confirmation had been received that the full £30,000 applied for had now been approved.

Members noted the report, and the current position with regard to the procurement of the works for the new Town Hall entrance.

In terms of financing, a question had previously been asked concerning the amounts that Town & Parish Councils were allowed to borrow. The Town Clerk advised that there was no fixed limit, but it should not exceed £500k in any one financial year.

FAR-13/18

Rentokil Service Agreement

The Town Clerk reported that, following consultation with Members, the service agreement with Rentokil to empty the grease trap outside the kitchen at the rear of the Town Hall had been extended to a monthly service. This was in response to recent problems with the grease trap becoming over-full and creating a noxious smell in the recent hot weather.

In response to questions, the Town Clerk advised that notices had been placed in the kitchen asking users not to deposit food waste in the sinks. As another preventative measure, it was also suggested that perhaps a 'grease pot' could be located in the kitchen for fats to be deposited into.

The extension of the service agreement with Rentokil for the emptying of the grease trap was endorsed.

FAR-14/18

Ellesmere Play Areas

The Town Clerk reported that, following a recent safety inspection of the Kingfisher Way Play Area, it was recommended that two new self-closing gates should be installed to replace the existing gates that were defective and a potential health and safety hazard for young children. Quotes for the work had been sought, and the cost for each gate was likely to be in the region of £1k.

The goalposts at Beech Grove Recreation Area needed cleaning/re-painting, and a quote for £125 + VAT had been received for the work.

AGREED - that the works at both Kingfisher Way Play Area and Beech Grove Recreation Area be approved.

FAR-15/18

Cemetery Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that the new legal agreement for the Cemetery had now been signed by both Councils.

Further to the comments of members of the Cemetery Working Group at the last Town Council meeting, the Town Clerk reported that a meeting had been held on 2 August with the Working Group (ETC and ERPC members) and the Cemetery Co-ordinator to clarify the new arrangements and the role of the Working Group. Members who had attended the meeting confirmed that it had been very useful and had answered all their questions.

The Town Clerk added that there had been a delay in assimilating the former Joint Burial Committee's accounts into the Town Council accounts, but this had now been resolved. A separate account and banking arrangements for the Cemetery had been set-up, and future meetings of the Working Group would be able to receive the latest statements and balances.

The agents for the Cemetery Lodge had notified the Council that a replacement shower unit had been installed at a cost of around £200.

The report was noted.

The meeting closed at 11.41am

Chair: 

Date: 16 - 1 - 19.