

UNADOPTED

POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Tuesday 7th September 2010 in the Council Chamber, 49 High Street, Polegate at 7:30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs A Watkins (Acting Chair), S. Barber, Mrs C Berry, Mrs J Bigsby and M Cunningham.

Mrs Lin Baxter – Acting Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Ognjanovic – Office Manager

9368 Apologies for absence

Cllrs G Carter, J Rogers, T Voyce, Mrs J Voyce

9369 Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda

Cllrs A Watkins declared a personal and on-prejudicial interest in 9371(b) only as a Governor of Willingdon Community School and took no part in the discussions on this item.

Cllr Mrs J Bigsby declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in 9371(b) as a volunteer and parent of Willingdon Community School.

9370 Minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2010

The draft minutes from the meeting held on 20th July 2010 were not agreed by the committee; were duly amended and then accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and then adopted by the committee.

9371 Matters Arising from minutes of 20th July 2010

(i) Minute 9309 Grant Applications

a) Crimestoppers

The previous clerk had written to Crimestoppers and the office is awaiting the current set of accounts.

b) Relateen

Cllr Mrs Bigsby informed members that she had spoken to Ms Brown Deputy Head Willingdon Community School regarding the value of this service at the school, and she had said that it was a valuable service very well used. It had been recognised that it was better to try to address relationship problems earlier in life.

Members agreed to recommend that a grant of £500 be awarded to the Relateen Service at Willingdon Community School.
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(ii) Minutes 9310 Policies

The Airs document was now in the office but there had been no opportunity as yet to look at the employment policies.

9372 Wealden Citizens Advice Bureau

Cllr J Harmer had requested clarification of Minute 9227 (25.05.10)

The accounts for grants to other organisations were studied and it was noted that Wealden CAB had received the following grants in the 2010 – 2011 financial year:-

£1500 – second ½ of 2009/2010 grant

£1000 – 1st ½ 2010/2011 grant
£1000 - 2nd ½ 2010/2011 will be paid at end of September
Any decision regarding grant aid 2011/2012 to Wealden CAB will be made in the Budget Meetings to be held in November.

9373

Committee Terms of Reference

Clarification of responsibilities of committees to set and manage their budgets.

Committees can set and manage their budgets but Council has the overall responsibility of these budgets as committees are not given full delegated powers.

It was agreed to recommend to Council that full delegated powers are granted to each committee with effect from the new Council in 2011.

It was further recommended that any Advisory Groups become sub committees and report back to their main committee

9374

Report from Buildings and Land Advisory Group

No report. It was agreed that for future meetings a written report would be requested.

9375

Audit

(i) Appointment of Internal Auditor

This had been confirmed as Mulberry & Co and the appointment letter and terms of reference signed and filed.

(ii) Internal Audit report August 2010

Mark Mulberry had visited the office on 25th August and carried out an extensive 'hand over' audit with the Acting Clerk. A copy of his report is on file.

Members agreed to recommend to Full Council the Internal Auditor's report dated 25th August 2010 and to implement his recommendations.

(iii) Internal Audit Plan

Mulberry & Co had recommended two audits per annum rather than the four in the current Financial Regulations, the first would take place in October and would look at:-

Review Standing orders, Financial Regulations, and Risk Assessments

Review of Minutes

Review of tender process

Production of internal audit risk assessment and detailed audit plan for financial aspects of the audit

Review of September bank and petty cash reconciliations

Review of day to day procedures employed in the office

The time taken would 3 hours on site and 2 hours off site

Spring Audit

Review of day to day bookkeeping

Review of year end reconciliations

Review of year end accounts pack for external auditors

Review of wages and VAT records

Time 3 – 4 hours on site 2 hours off site

At the end of this process Council will receive a full pack of our workings, independence and competence questionnaire and a summary management letter which can be taken to committee

as part of the review of the effectiveness of the internal audit.

Members agreed to recommend to Council the adoption the Internal Auditor's Plan and to amend Financial Regulations accordingly.

(iv)

External Audit

The Acting Clerk reported that she had been contacted by Mazars requesting additional information on the papers submitted for external audit, these requests could be at an additional cost to the Council and would be reflected when the final invoice is submitted.

Members noted the information

9376

CRB Checks

(i) CRB checks had been submitted for the Office Manager and the Handyman

(ii) Consideration of CRB checks for councillors and contractors. Members considered CRB checks for all councillors and it was not considered necessary unless they have unsupervised access to vulnerable persons in the course of their duties as councillors. The Office will verify with contractors what the status of their CRB checks are.

9377

Financial Reports

a) Income/Expenditure against budgets to date

This had been circulated and noted by members.

b) Personnel Committee projected overspend.

Members were presented with a draft revised Personnel Budget (file) which had taken into consideration the current staffing situation, it showed that they may be a small shortfall but it would not as substantial as originally thought and recorded in Minute 9317.

9378

Budgets – preparing for 2011/2012 and 3 year forecast

Cllr Cunningham spoke on the budgets, certain items are fixed and essential items, Council should agree at % increase in line with the RPI and this is how each committee should set their budget, then they should add in any new projects which have been very carefully considered. A three year forecast of fixed expenditure has already been produced and would be updated year on year.

9379

Financial Regulations – Annual Review

The revision would be noted on the front cover, with the agreed revisions noted on the front inside page.

Members agreed to recommend the revisions to Council.

A copy of the revisions is attached to these minutes

9380

Standing Orders – Proposed Implementation of SO 15 (a)(iv)

a The Council may, at its annual meeting, appoint standing committees and may at any other time appoint such other committees as may be necessary, and:

(iv) may appoint substitute Councillors to a committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a committee if ordinary Councillors of the committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer 3 clear working days before the meeting that they are unable to attend;

Members agreed to recommend to Council that the above Standing Order be implemented immediately and named substitute Councillors be appointed to each committee.
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9381

Risk Assessment (Financial Regulations – Reg. 16)

Members discussed this regulation and its implications to the Council Risk Management Policies are held by Council and they need to be reviewed annually – this will be done at a future meeting. It was noted that any new Council activities must be risk assessed and those assessments be adopted by Council.

9382

Review of Policies

A list of all the current Council Policies will be compiled together with a proposed timetable for review for consideration at the next Finance and Policy meeting.

9383

Responses to consultations from Government and other Authorities

Any consultations received by the office would be taken to Council so that timely responses can be made to them. Members would consider a policy for this in due course.