

CHIPPENHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held at the Town Hall, High Street, Chippenham on Wednesday 25th October 2017 at 7pm

COUNCILLORS: Desna Allen
Peter Hutton
Mary Norton
Nick Murry
Andy Phillips
John Scragg
Jenny Budgell
Teresa Hutton
Ashley O'Neill
Michelle Pearce
Chris Ruck
Sandie Webb (Chairman)

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor David Powell

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mark Smith (Chief Executive)
Adrian Jones (Deputy Chief Executive)
Charlotte Starkie (Head of Finance and Administration)

PUBLIC PRESENT: Kathryn Crossweller and Jules Brogan from Chippenham BID.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions were received.

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence.

41. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

42. MINUTES

Members approved as a true record the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6th September 2017 and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

RESOLVED that:

The minutes are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

44. CHIPPENHAM BID UPDATE

Members received a presentation from representatives of the BID on the following:

- The budget for the events in 2017/18 that are covered by the Service Level Agreement with the Town Council.
- The planned Christmas event 2017.
- Events planned for 2018.
- Data collection of attendance at events and marketing of events.

Questions were taken from Members on the following:

- Concessional charges for community groups to have a stall at the Christmas event.
- Building work being undertaken at the front of the Angel Hotel and whether this will impact on the Christmas lights switch on event.
- The carnival procession needing to involve a larger number of community groups in 2018.
- Marketing of events and the need to recognise the prominence of the Town Council as a key partner and not merely a sponsor, via more appropriate marketing and branding.
- Confusion amongst the public over the difference between the BID and Chippenham connected.

The Chief Executive informed members that he had met with the Interim Manager and made a request that the BID revisit the Service Level Agreement to ensure that the prominence of the Town Council is made clear in literature that advertise the events delivered by the BID. The Town Council will continue to support any opportunity to develop a stronger working relationship and partnership with the BID, but that the BID will engage with the Town Council at an earlier opportunity when planning events.

45. WORKING PARTY FEEDBACK

i. Finance Working Party

The Chairman of the Finance Working Party gave feedback from the meetings held on 3rd October and 24th October 2017. The Chairman informed the meeting that the WP would continue to meet after the budget had been set, as the meeting was facilitating helpful discussions on the Council's financial matters.

ii. Wiltshire Council Car Park Charges Consultation Working Party

The Chairman of the Working Party presented the notes from the meeting. There was a further discussion and a request that additional information be provided in the Council's response in relation to the town bus service, and not just rural bus services as mentioned in the consultation document. The Chief Executive was to send a letter, along with the consultation response, which highlighted the Council's concerns over the lack of car parking in Chippenham in general, and issues over the free spaces being taken away from Christmas usage, and the Council's wish to continue to see a town bus service in addition to rural bus services.

46. ASSET TRANSFER AND SERVICE DEVOLUTION WORKING PARTY

Members received a report from the Chief Executive and agreed that a working party be established in order to develop a course of action with regard to the transfer of assets and service devolution from Wiltshire Council. It was suggested that other third sector organisations be engaged as part of the process to ensure partnership working. This working party would report to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

RESOLVED that:

The following 9 members join the Asset Transfer and Service Devolution Working Party:

Councillors Desna Allen, David Powell, John Scragg, Nick Murry, Mary Norton, Teresa Hutton, Andy Phillips, Chris Ruck and Sandie Webb.

47. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS AND BANK RECONCILIATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2017

Members noted the report presented by the Head of Finance and Administration on the current financial position of the Council.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

48. PHOTOCOPIER LEASE AT THE TOWN HALL AND MUSEUM

Members received a report from the Head of Finance and Administration on the tendering process completed in order to secure a new 4 year contract on the photocopiers in the Town Hall and Museum.

RESOLVED that:

Responsibility be delegated to the Head of Finance and Administration to enter into a new contract for a period of 4 years of the photocopiers at the Town Hall and Museum.

49. FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE COUNCIL

Members received a report from the Head of Finance and Administration on the current midyear position of the Council. Attention was drawn to the General Reserves and Earmarked funds, as well as the additional income, that the Council was generating through providing services across town. Several efficiency savings had also been achieved.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

50. EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR 2016 TO 2017

Members received a report from the Head of Finance and Administration that confirmed that no matters had been raised during the external audit process, other than a request to reduce (by one day) the length of time that the elector's rights notice must be displayed next year.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

51. INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

Members received a report from the Head of Finance and Administration that confirmed that the internal auditor was satisfied with the financial affairs of the Council, following a 2 day visit in September 2017.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

52. BUDGET SETTING PROCESS FOR 2018/19

Members received a report from the Head of Finance and Administration on the budget setting process, the likely budget for next year the Council will need in order to continue to deliver all services to the same standard, and the impact on the budget that the proposed new projects will have. It remained that the precept could, in future, be capped at a 2% increase, but was unlikely in the next year.

It seemed likely that in order to continue to deliver all the services in town, the Council would need to combine an increase in precept on the electorate with a movement of funds from the General Reserves into the revenue budget.

There was a general discussion on the need to capture all the efficiency savings that the Council makes, as well as instigate some future savings targets.

The Finance Working Party would continue to meet all year round and would look at a policy decision on the amount of money that remains in General Reserves and Earmarked Funds, as well as consider a 5 year financial plan (Medium Term Financial Strategy).

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

53. UPDATE ON THE OPERATION OF THE BATH ROAD TOILET

Members received a report from the Deputy Chief Executive on some of the problems associated with the Bath Road toilet facility which the Council took over this year. The annual running costs (approximately £17,000) are higher than proposed by Wiltshire Council, and the facility is used by those engaged in using drugs, thus proving to be a difficult facility to clean and manage. The BID had assisted with the funding of the facility in year one, but the Council was unaware if the BID wished to fund the facility beyond the first year.

There was a general discussion about the facility that included the damage to the Council's reputation if the facility was not offered to the same high standard as the other Council run public toilets, that the BID had yet to confirm if it would continue to support the facility financially and that the police should be monitoring the facility more frequently to eliminate the drugs problem.

RESOLVED that:

- a. The report be noted.
- b. The Deputy Chief Executive will prepare a report for the next Strategy and Resources Committee meeting that lists the nature of the problems with the facility, proposes some solutions to the problems, and considers the financial implications of resolving the issues as well as keeping the facility open with and without the financial support from the BID.

54. SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Members received a report from the Deputy Chief Executive on steps taken to secure a new sponsor for the town's Christmas tree in the Market Place. No business had made an offer for a one year sponsorship deal, however the Deputy Chief Executive was liaising with a local business that was prepared to take on the sponsorship opportunity over a 5 year period.

There was a general discussion that suggested that the invitation to sponsor the Christmas tree could have been extended to all business in Chippenham and not just those businesses located in the High Street area.

RESOLVED that:

The Deputy Chief Executive be granted authority to seek the best sponsorship offer that can be obtained by liaising with the company which had offered to engage in a 5 year sponsorship opportunity.

55. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

No matters were submitted for consideration at a future meeting.

56. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 13th December 2017.

The meeting concluded at 8.45pm.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting

Signed on behalf of the committee as a true record of the meeting

Signed:

Date: