



MINUTES of the POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2012 at 6.30PM

Present: Cllrs Neno (Chair),
Belchamber MBE, Emberson,
Gammon, Long and Squires.
Cllrs Hulmes and Bowyer
attended as substitutes for
Cllrs Caffyn and Britton
respectively.

2011/2012

49. EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The evacuation procedures were noted.

50. MOBILE PHONES

Members and the public were reminded that the use of mobile phones (other than on silent) was prohibited at Town Council and Committee meetings.

51. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Caffyn and Britton.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers were invited to make any declarations of personal and/or or prejudicial interest that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. None were declared at this stage of the meeting.

53. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2011 (previously circulated) were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

54. CHAIR'S REPORT AND URGENT ITEMS

There were none.

55. PUBLIC FORUM

County Councillor Nigel Peters thanked the Town Council for inviting him to its meetings.

56. OFFICER'S REPORT

56.1 Localism Act 2011

56.1.1 The Town Clerk gave a presentation, to which all Members of the Town Council were invited, on the key aspects of the Localism Act 2011, particularly as it affected the Town Council. Firstly, he summarised the main elements of

the Act and then went into more detail with regard to those issues particularly appertaining to the Town Council. He stated that the General Power of Competence would shortly be available to those parish and town councils that had met the eligibility criteria. The only element outstanding for Littlehampton was that the Clerk would need to undertake a further module of his CiLCA qualification. Once this had been recorded by Council, it would have the power to do anything that individuals might do, including things "unlike anything" that public bodies did.

- 56.1.2 The Clerk then went on to explain in some depth the emerging new Standards regime and the urgency to implement a Code of Conduct before the end of June. Detailed guidelines on this were still awaited, but the Clerk clarified what he understood to be the process to date and also predetermination and predisposition. He also explained that the offences under the Localism Act regarding the Code of Conduct would be criminal with fines of up to £5,000 potentially applicable.
- 56.1.3 Other changes explained were Council Tax Referenda; Neighbourhood Plans; Assets of Community Value; the Community Right to Challenge; the Community Right to Build and transparency on local pay. On the latter point he explained that the Town Council would not need to create a pay policy and that for Town and Parish Councils the Localism Act changed little as this was already covered by the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.
- 56.1.4 Lastly, he went on to explain how the Localism Act had taken forward the Community Infrastructure Levy, with the inclusion of the statement that a significant proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy needed to go to projects in the neighbourhood of the development. Again, further guidance was awaited.
- 56.1.5 Members discussed these key points in some detail and noted the urgent timescale that related particularly to the Code of Conduct.

56.2 Prayers at Council Meetings

The Committee considered a legal briefing from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) following a judicial review regarding the holding of prayers as part of formal Council meetings. The review had not come to its conclusions as a result of equality legislation, but purely on whether Councils had powers to hold prayers as part of the formal meeting and agenda. This was found to be not the case, although the Secretary of State had now advised that the General Power of Competence could be used to circumnavigate this issue. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The current position be noted.

56.3 Controlled Parking Zone

The Committee had before it an exchange of correspondence between the County Council and the Town Clerk regarding proposals by the County Council to employ consultants to undertake a review of parking, with the potential outcome of there being a controlled parking zone in the town. The Town Clerk had previously stated to the County Council that this was unnecessary and unwelcome. Although there were some parking issues that needed to be addressed, these could be identified by the Town Council to the

Over

County Council and thereby obviate the need for this work. It was thought that this could result in a number of outcomes dangerous both to tourism and retail sectors. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The stance set out in the Town Clerk's email of 15th February be endorsed.

56.4 CCTV

The Town Clerk reported orally on recent discussions that he had had with the District Council regarding the CCTV cameras in the town. One camera currently had not been brought into operation, which was likely to slightly increase costs. This was based on a 50:50 apportionment of cost between the District and Town Councils. The Town Clerk had reported to the District Council that he had no issues with a slight increase in the cost, which could be met from the Town Traders' Forum budget, but wished to be assured before doing so that Littlehampton was paying a similar rate as other areas in the District. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The position as set out by the Town Clerk be endorsed.

56.5 "Portas Pilots"

The Town Clerk reported orally that he was meeting with the Town Traders' Partnership on 28th February 2012, whom he understood were keen to progress a "Portas Pilot Scheme". This could potentially attract sufficient funds to the Town Centre to introduce a range of imaginative schemes that could then be shared with other town centres across the country. The Town Clerk was keen to support the traders on this initiative, which currently had no financial implications, as he believed that even if unsuccessful it would be a very good exercise to bring the traders together in such a way. It was **RESOLVED** that:

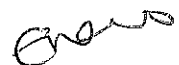
The Traders' Partnership be supported in applying for funding to operate a "Portas Pilot" scheme if traders so wished.

57. ACCOUNTS

57.1 Annual Investment Strategy 2012/13

The Committee considered a report (previously circulated) which explained that the Council annually needed to review its Annual Investment Strategy. Members were supportive of the continued prudent approach to investment and also supported the opening of possibilities to invest with other High Street banks, including the Co-operative Bank, at the discretion of the Responsible Financial Officer, in consultation with the Town Clerk. It was therefore **RESOLVED** that Council be **RECOMMENDED** to:

- 1. Approve the Annual Investment Strategy 2012/13 as set out in the Appendix to the report.**
- 2. Approve investing with the Co-operative Bank or other High Street bank, at the discretion**



of the Responsible Financial Officer, in
consultation with the Town Clerk.
3. Otherwise note the report.

57.2 Finance Report 2011/12

57.2.1 The Committee considered the latest periodic Finance Report for the financial year 2011/12 (previously circulated). The inclusion of the Chairs of the Planning & Transportation and Performance & Publicity Overview Committees as authorised cheque signatories was supported. As a result of that proposal, Members discussed the role of the Mayor and whether it was appropriate for him/her to Chair other committees. The Committee thought not at this time and asked the Town Clerk to consider this when redrafting the Standing Orders.

57.2.2 Lastly, the Town Clerk would circulate details of how the cost of elections had been broken down by the District Council.

57.2.3 It was therefore **RESOLVED** that:

1. The report be noted.
2. Council be RECOMMENDED to amend Financial Regulation 5.2 to include the Chairs of the Planning & Transportation and Performance & Publicity Overview Committees as cheque signatories, from 25th May 2012.

57.3 Section 137 Expenditure – Limit for 2012/2013

The Committee considered a legal briefing from NALC explaining that the Department for Communities and Local Government had confirmed that the appropriate sum for parish councils for the purposes of Section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 for 2012/13 was £6.80. It was **RESOLVED** that:

This be noted.

58. MASTERPLAN – NORTH LITTLEHAMPTON

The Town Clerk reported that he was currently progressing as a matter of some urgency the land exchanges for North Littlehampton and that the Morrisons planning application had been approved by the District Council's Development Control Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

23.04.12.

E. HEND
CHAIR