

**SLEAFORD TOWN COUNCIL
MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance and Strategy Committee** held on
Wednesday October 9th, 2013 at 7:30pm
at The Source, Southgate, Sleaford

PRESENT: Cllr M Graves (Chairman)

Cllr M Allan (Vice Chairman)	Cllr K Dolby	Cllr B Dunbar-Beckford
Cllr K Fernandes	Cllr G Jackson	Cllr H Lorimer
Cllr J Mathieson	Cllr D Suiter	Cllr G Titmus
Cllr J Titmus	Cllr D Vere-Critchler	Cllr B Watson (Mayor)

Also present: Mrs S McIntyre (Clerk), Mrs M Waddingham (Assistant Clerk), Mrs L Savage (RFO) and 5 members of the public.

The Chairman welcomed all present and opened the meeting at 8:25pm.

F&S.1 APOLOGIES. Apologies, with reasons had been given to the Clerk from Councillors D Birks and C Darch. These were accepted.

F&S.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. To receive Disclosable pecuniary interests in accordance with S.34 of the Localism Act 2011. There were none.

F&S.3 MINUTES. The Clerk's Notes from the meeting held on August 21st, 2013 have been circulated.

The Clerk explained an amendment to these notes which had been made after they were circulated to members. One further amendment was requested.

It was proposed by Cllr D Vere-Critchler and seconded by Cllr B Dunbar-Beckford, that the Notes from the meeting held on August 21st, 2013, with the amendments, be accepted as Minutes of this meeting.

Vote – 12 for and 1 abstention. The Resolution was passed, the Chairman signed the Minutes.

F&S.4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.

The Chairman said a further letter had been received relating to agenda item 12 which will be circulated with that item.

F&S.5 CLERK'S REPORT.

- **Action Log** – The Chairman said little or no action has been taken with the Neighbourhood plan. He asked that all Councillors responsible for this, meet as soon as possible.
- **Traffic Model** – date of meeting of Councillors as of 10th July – Working Group, Councillors H Lorimer, K Fernandes, D Vere-Critchler, M Graves and

J Mathieson to meet Friday 11th October at 2pm. The Chairman said there is much confusion with regard to the traffic model and it needs some direction. Cllr J Mathieson said she is unable to attend this meeting.

- **From GP 25.9.13** – recommend that the Mayor be STC representative on CAB. This to go to Full Council.
- **Best Value WG** – verbal update – meeting booked for Friday 18th October at 10am.

F&S .6 FINANCIAL REPORT

- Overview of whole Council's position - appropriate reports attached. The Chairman said the report was at September 30th – half way through the year. He asked all Committee Chairmen to look at their budget lines and liaise with the R.F.O. to amend if necessary.
- From GP 25.09.13 - internet policies. Request – request F&S to set aside funds for legal support, if needed.
Cllr G Jackson explained the background. He said in certain circumstances a Solicitor's letter may be appropriate. The Clerk explained the initial response from the Solicitor. Cllr J Mathieson had concerns about public money being used to save Councillors' reputations but said the TC had to protect employees.
It was proposed by Cllr M Allan and seconded by Cllr D Suiter that a further £2,000 is added to the £1760 on the 'Professional Services' line to deal with social media issues to protect the Council and its employees – this subject to the money being found.

- Vote 9 for; 1 abstention and 2 against. The Resolution was passed.
- Report from RFO. This was accepted and noted. A recommendation was withdrawn in view of a Chairman's recommendation.
- Credit Card – consider a corporate credit card. The Clark outlined some recent circumstances where a credit/debit card was needed. It was proposed by Cllr G Titmus and seconded by Cllr M Allan that The Clerk and R.F.O. investigate a TC debit card together with any protocols etc necessary. To report to a Full Council meeting.
Vote – 12 for. The Resolution was passed.
- Update from AdvantEdge – written report. The Chairman explained the circumstances. He said the payment due in September for support had been withheld until the issues had been resolved. He said he would do his best to get the matter resolved and report to the next F&S meeting.
- Financial Regulations – work in progress to update. The current Regulations are being amended. A draft will be presented to the next F&S meeting.

F&S.7 CONSULTANT FOR VARIOUS PLANNING MATTERS – update from Chairman/Vice Chairman. The Chairman had circulated a report which he explained.

It was proposed by Cllr D Vere-Critchler and seconded by Cllr M Allan that the recommendations be accepted en bloc. These were:

1. For the 2013/14 the Council identifies and uses funding from within current income and expenditure

2. For the 2014/15 and 2015/16 financial years a budget line is placed within Finance and Strategy Committee for the sum of £20,000 per annum.
3. Any shortfall in funding requirement should be met from balances or reserves but if budgets allow this should only be on a short term basis with sums being repaid to any balance within the 3 year timescale

Vote: 12 for. The Resolution was passed.

It was proposed by Cllr M Allan and seconded by Cllr K Fernandes that the progress of the appointment of consultants be heard in closed session – to precede item 12.

Vote 12 for. The resolution was passed.

F&S.8 MONUMENT GARDENS MUSEUM/TOILET BLOCK. Progress of project – verbal report from Cllr G Titmus. Cllr G Titmus explained the progress of the bids. The next joint meeting planned for November 7th has been moved to November 13th. The Clerk was asked to check the progress of the planning application.

F&S.9 CEMETERY TOILETS – Update, if any, on obtaining quotes. Cllr Titmus said different types of structure were being considered before quotes were obtained. This will be a longer term project so he would not expect a report for the next F&S meeting.

F&S.10 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS, if any.

- **Clerk** – Money’s yard toilets
- **Clerk** – Precept changes.
- **Cllr BW** – from the presentation – Recreational/play areas – what is the TC going to get out of this by way of play areas etc.

F&S.11 RESOLUTION TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION. Cllr K Fernandes proposed and Cllr M Allan seconded that “in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw”.

Vote 12 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S. 7 CONSULTANT FOR VARIOUS PLANNING MATTERS.

Cllr M Allan said there was another way of looking at the matter. He explained this to the meeting.

It was resolved that the original working group of Cllr M Allan (Leader), Cllr G Titmus, Cllr K Fernandes, Cllr D Birks and Cllr G Jackson be tasked with approaching NHTC, working closely with the Clerk, to look at the procurement process. E Mails could be used as a way of maintaining momentum and they should report back to Finance and Strategy.

At 9.30pm. It was resolved that the meeting continues for a further 30 minutes.

F&S.12 MEETING ARRANGED BY NKDC plus letter(s) from NKDC. The Clerk updated the meeting on a meeting with a solicitor who has been given a preliminary brief and some documents.
It was resolved that Roythorne's be appointed for advice/representation in this matter.

It was resolved that an urgent meeting with the solicitor and Cllrs M Graves, G Titmus, K Dolby, B Watson and J Mathieson, plus an Officer, be arranged as soon as possible, before the next FC meeting on Oct 23rd.

It was resolved that the Clerk replies to the latest letter from NKDC accepting the Oct 29th date provisionally, explaining the TC was taking advice which will go to Full Council before confirming the date.

F&S.13 EASTGATE CAR PARK – Report attached
It was resolved that the Eastgate Car Park working group liaises, via e mail if necessary, to send suggested reply contents to the Clerk for her to formulate a letter to send to the TC solicitor..

The former Innes England bays:

It was resolved that the new owners should be contacted to say that if they required the 6 spaces, they will be at the current car park permit price.

10pm. It was resolved that the meeting continue for a further 10 minutes.

F&S.14 COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC MEETING – decide meeting or Working Group to look at comments and progress.

- Release of information – see attached.

Cllr B Watson asked if this should be deferred to give the TC chance to ask for questions.

The Clerk confirmed that a folder of comments from the meeting and since the meeting has been collated ready for answering.

It was resolved that a WG of Cllrs D Vere-Critchler, G Titmus, D Suiter and the Clerk look at the comments and produce answers for those questions that can be answered.

It was also resolved that Roythornes be asked about what information can be released to the public.

F&S.15 OFFICE PREMISES – Update. Details of a possible building had been circulated. It was resolved that the Clerk and Cllr M Graves assess the suitability of the premises.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10.12pm.