

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

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance and Strategy Committee** held on
Wednesday May 16th 2012 at 7:45pm
at The Source, Southgate, Sleaford

PRESENT: Cllr M Graves (Chairman)

Cllr I Dolby (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr B Watson (Leader)
Cllr K Fernandes
Cllr T Mayfield
Cllr D Vere-Critchler

Cllr M Allan
Cllr D Birks
Cllr G Jackson
Cllr DSuiter

Cllr D Andrews
Cllr J Charlesworth
Cllr J Mathieson
Cllr G Titmus

Also present: Mrs S McIntyre (Clerk), Mr S Fletcher (Interim Deputy Clerk), Mrs M Waddingham (Assistant Clerk) and a representative from Sleaford Standard.

This meeting started at 7:45pm.

F&S.1 APOLOGIES. Apologies, with reasons had been given to the Clerk from Councillors D Croker, J Titmus, B Dunbar-Beckford and K Dolby.

F&S.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Item 4 (Clerk's Report – Town Fund, Jubilee allocation) – Cllr J Mathieson – personal – organiser.

Item 4 (Clerk's Report – Town Fund, Jubilee allocation) – Cllr M Allan – personal – lives close to where a street party will be held.

F&S.3 CHAIRMAN's REPORT.

- The Chairman asked members to observe Standing Order's and to comment once with no cross table discussion.
- Item 8 – (Benchmarking) should read Section 5 of the 1999 Local Government Act applies to Principal Local Authorities, not Town and Parish Councils.
- Guidance for officers. Chairman requested that any request or resolution contained guidance for officers and time lines.
- The Chairman thanked staff for their hard work during the year and especially the Clerk and Mr S Fletcher.

F&S.4 CLERK's REPORT.

- NKDC Plan 2012-2015.
- Town Fund – Press Release to be issued.
- Town Council asked to support an Early Day Motion on planning appeals.

F&S.5 MINUTES. Notes of the meeting held on March 14th 2012, had been circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr D Vere-Critchler and seconded by Cllr G Titmus, that the Notes from March 14th 2012, be accepted as Minutes of that meeting.

Vote – 13 for and 1 abstention. The Resolution was passed, the Chairman signed the Minutes.

F&S.6 FINANCIAL REPORT. Overview of whole council's position.

a) Completed or Draft accounts for 2011/12. Mr S Fletcher explained a sum of £31.18 is preventing finalising year end. The Financial Summary and bank reconciliation are all correct.

The Chairman explained various reports. The statement comparison between the estimated surplus and actual surplus shows the estimated amount was very close to the final surplus.

b) Statement Debtors and Creditors as at the year end. The Chairman worked his way through the documents and explained some of the detail.

c) To approve finalised balance transfers as previously notified (including a comparison of those presented at the last F&S and actuals)

d) Balances held in all accounts plus a breakdown of earmarked funds. These transfers to be approved by the Full Council Meeting on May 30th.

Cllr D Vere-Critchler proposed to approve the above en bloc. Seconded by Cllr M Allan.

Vote – 14 for. The Resolution was passed.

The Chairman said the first round of the new Committees need to look back through their budgets for 2012/2013 in the light of the finalised year end 2011/12 figures as the budgets were prepared 12 months ago.

F&S.7 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT To note copy of the currently Financial Risk Assessment prior to re-adoption at the Full Council meeting on 23rd May 2012

The Chairman explained this item is for noting as it is on the Full Council Agenda for 23rd May. If there are any problems with this Risk Assessment, then it will be referred back to the next Finance & Strategy Meeting.

F&S.8 BENCHMARKING (Report - Cllr M Graves)

The Chairman explained his report.

There were discussions regarding the best value for money.

The Chairman proposed and Cllr M Allan seconded the following recommendation:-

- 1) Analyse and evaluate where possible our own performance in comparison with other Councils.
- 2) Seek to establish the principal of best value wherever possible.
- 3) Establish a performance plan that is subject to monitoring and review at regular intervals.
- 4) Ensure that additional sources of funding, if available, are secured to supplement any expenditure undertaken.

Vote – 13 for and 1 against. The Resolution was passed.

The Clerk asked about time scales for this and how and by whom would this be done.

Councillors M Graves, M Allan, D Vere-Crither, D Suiter and I Dolby volunteered to form a working group.

It was proposed by Cllr D Birks and seconded by Cllr D Vere-Crither to accept this working group and for them to meet prior to the next Finance & Strategy meeting, to report to that meeting.

Vote – 14 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.9 REPORTS FROM MEETINGS:

- **Open Spaces Recreational group** – report from meeting.

Cllr D Vere-Crither said this report was for noting and there were no recommendations from the report.

F&S.10 GENERAL TRAFFIC ISSUES – From F.C. April 4th. Town Council to consider the general traffic issues and problems – not connected with Tesco/Maltings projects. Consider an Officer meeting with LCC representative.

There was a general discussion about traffic issues.

Cllr M Allan said that they had previously been asked for a list of traffic issues.

It was proposed by Cllr M Allan that Councillors submit their traffic issues from their wards to the office by Monday, May 21st. A meeting with LCC and the relevant Town Council Officer to be arranged to discuss these issues, then report back to the Committee. Seconded by Cllr D Vere-Crither.

Vote – 14 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.11 VOLUNTEERS POLICY – Further enquiries as requested concerning the implementation of this policy.

The Chairman asked members if they wished to pursue this policy, with a view to creating and adopting a volunteer policy.

It was proposed by Cllr D Suiter and seconded by Cllr M Allan to pursue this. Councillors J Mathieson and D Suiter volunteered to work with an Officer. Vote – 14 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.12 TOWN COUNCIL SURGERIES – To consider holding regular surgeries for members of the public (Report – Cllr Brian Watson)

Councillor B Watson explained his report and said other councils hold surgeries.

There was discussion about surgeries that had been previously held by the Town Council and various reasons why these declined.

The Clerk asked what budget would fund potential room hire charges.

Cllr B Watson proposed to hold surgeries on a trial period for 6 months, with 3 Councillors from each ward to attend. The Leader and the Clerk to work out the logistics of this. Seconded by Cllr D Suiter.

Vote – 13 for and 1 abstention. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.13 MUSEUM TRUST – Update on progress – Cllr G Titmus

Cllr G Titmus spoke briefly on the progress. This was noted.

F&S.14 CEMETERY – PATHS AND OTHER MAJOR WORKS – DRIVEWAY AND TOILET BLOCK

- a) A report had been circulated outlining some Pathway repairs currently planned within Services funding.
- b) To consider a longer term strategy.

There were some questions about surfaces.

It was proposed by Cllr M Allan and seconded by Cllr I Dolby to accept the following recommendations:-

- 1) The work continues with the footpaths through the Services Committee – the Committee to return to Finance & Strategy if future funding needs to be found.
- 2) The Finance & Strategy Committee starts to examine the cemetery toilet block and establishing a policy and costs for future options – to return to a Finance & Strategy meeting.

Vote – 14 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.15 EASTGATE CAR PARK –

- a) To look at enquiries to date regarding resurfacing/repairs etc.
- b) To consider establishing the cost of complete re-surfacing works, intermediary works and a program to deliver this, then subsequently review the current financial provision

Some questions were asked about the suitability of the surface and obtaining quotes.

It was proposed by Cllr M Graves that a & b, be accepted. Seconded by Cllr D Vere-Critchler.

Vote – 14 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.16 TOILET PROVISION. To establish costs of the provision of two new facilities as previously agreed in principle.

It was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr I Dolby to consider forming a Working Group to:-

- Progress the above
- Agree location of a 2nd unit and seek agreement in principle as required
- Identify sources of funding including grants
- In the light of the above review if necessary the present short term lease of the Moneys Yard facility.

Vote – 14 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.17 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

Cllr B Watson requested Lottery Funding for Toilets on allotments:- look at provision of grant funding/involving Hill Holt Wood etc.

F&S.18 RESOLUTION TO MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION.

It was proposed by Cllr D Vere-Critchler, 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. Seconded by Cllr T Mayfield.

Vote – 11 for; 2 against and 1 abstention. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.19 OLYMPIC TORCH – Details from recent meeting.

It was resolved to agree:-

- to the recreation ground being used for the assembly of the procession, bearing in mind the possibility of the skatepark being used for demonstrations.
- any volunteers to act as marshalls and
- whether we can make any contributions to the cost.

It was resolved the Town Council makes no contribution towards the cost, as they are using the Recreation Ground.

Councillors D Vere-Critchler, K Fernandes, J Mathieson and G Jackson volunteered to act as marshalls.

F&S.20 REGENERATION ISSUES – Report from the meeting held 11th April

It was resolved that the Cllr M Allan leads a working group to look at costs to the council prior to the next Finance & Strategy meeting. The Clerk and the Leader to issue a press release which negates the information being published by NKDC.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:00pm.