

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

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance and Strategy Committee** held on
Wednesday November 21st 2012 at 7:30pm
at The Source, Southgate, Sleaford

PRESENT: Cllr M Graves (Chairman)

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|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Cllr I Dolby (Vice Chairman) | Cllr M Allan | Cllr D Andrews |
| Cllr D Birks (7:40pm) | Cllr J Charlesworth | Cllr K Fernandes |
| Cllr B Dunbar-Beckford | Cllr G Jackson | Cllr H Lorimer |
| Cllr J Mathieson | Cllr T Mayfield | Cllr D Suiter |
| Cllr G Titmus | Cllr D Vere-Critchler | |
| Cllr B Watson (Leader) | | |

Also present: Mrs S McIntyre (Clerk), Mrs M Waddingham (Assistant Clerk), Mrs L Savage (RFO), a representative for the Target and 1 member of the public.

The Chairman welcomed all present.

- F&S.1 APOLOGIES.** Apologies, with reasons had been given to the Clerk from Councillors K Dolby and J Titmus. 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 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – The next Finance and Strategy meeting will be the 30th January. The Chairman explained this was a long agenda and all Councillors had received papers in advance and any questions should be asked at the Office before the meeting. The Chairman was currently preparing a report of all resolved items during the past year and this would be presented to the meeting of 30th January. He also asked for clear Resolutions and what is expected from officers and required time lines.
- F&S.4 CLERK'S REPORT.**
- **Market performance.** Group requesting a 'Malthusian Paradox' performance during the Farmers' Market on December 2nd. Councillors felt this was not the appropriate forum for this event.
Action: Clerk to formulate a reply.
 - **Fields in Trust.** In its final stages, some questions have been asked and answered, now expecting results of the application.
- F&S.5 MINUTES.** Notes of the meeting held on October 10th 2012, had been circulated.

It was proposed by Cllr D Vere-Critchler and seconded by Cllr G Titmus, that the Notes from October 10th 2012, be accepted as Minutes of that meeting.

Vote – 12 for and 3 abstentions. The Resolution was passed, the Chairman signed the Minutes.

F&S.6 VIREMENTS.

- **From Personnel Committee** – agree virement from Personnel Committee budget. The Chairman explained the Committee had postponed the meeting. He said their intention was to vire £40,000 from the current committee budget into the Capital Programme line.
- **Virements** – Discussion of virements within F and S budget headings.

It was proposed by Cllr M Graves and seconded by Cllr D Vere-Critchler that £25,000 be vired from the Eastgate Car Park to the appropriate earmarked reserve and that £17,190 from the Capital Programme to the Open Spaces five year programme earmarked reserve.
(7.40pm) Cllr D Birks attended.

Action: SF/RFO to do virements.

Vote 15 for; 1 abstention. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.7 FINANCIAL REPORT

- Overview of whole council's position appropriate reports attached. This was noted.

The Chairman explained that the Services and General Purposes Committee had already approved their budgets. But before the 2013/14 budget could be considered there were two budgets that needed approving.

- **Personnel Committee budget** – If postponed - PC meeting has not taken place, then PC committee budget to be approved in this meeting.

The Chairman said the budget had been discussed by the Personnel Chairman and Vice Chairman as well as himself, as Chairman of Finance and Strategy. He advised acceptance of the budget. After some questions which were answered by the Chairman and the Clerk, it was proposed by Cllr I Dolby and seconded by Cllr T Mayfield that the Personnel Committee budget be accepted.

Vote 13 for. 1 against and 2 abstentions. The Budget was accepted.

- **Finance & Strategy Committee**

The Chairman explained various aspects of the F&S budget. He said that there was an omission – the CCTV line should read £9,000 and the Capital Programme line should read £51,100. Any reductions in the overall precept would currently be directly reflected in the capital programme.

With this amendment, he proposed and Cllr D Vere-Critchler seconded that the F&S budget should be accepted.

Vote – 16 for. The Resolution was passed.

- **2013/14 Budget** – Examine and discuss the budget for 2013/14 and recommend the required precept to go to Full Council on December 5th.

The Chairman explained the slight increase in the tax base to £5795.40 would result in an increase in funding of approximately 5463.67 – this was unconfirmed at this stage. By maintaining the cost per household (104.07 for B and D) the precept would therefore be £603127.27p.

It was proposed by Cllr M Graves and seconded by Cllr G Titmus that there be no net increase per household and the precept to remain at £104.07 for a B and D. The precept requested will be £603127.27p for a tax base of 5795.40. This recommendation to go to the Full Council Meeting on 5th December – this may be subject to a slight variance once the official tax base figure is circulated.

Vote – 16 for. The Resolution was passes.

- To arrange a meeting with Committee Chairmen to examine the 2013/14 budget. The Chairman asked Chairmen to have a meeting to examine the overall budget and in particular the potential drawings from the Capital Project line.
Action: Committee Chairmen to meet.
- Cllr B Watson said the Council should be proud that they had achieved such a financial improvement over the last 2 years. He thanked everyone involved for their efforts.

F&S.8 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT. To note the report and forward to Full Council, to note any actions/recommendations in the report.

The Chairman explained the report. This was then noted.

F&S.9 TERMS OF REFERENCE – Draft attached – agree TOR to be forwarded to Full Council for ratification.

There were some clarification points and one amendment that membership “is open to” all 18 Councillors.

The Chairman proposed and Cllr M Allan seconded that, with the amendment, the Terms of reference be accepted.

Vote - 16 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.10 VOLUNTEERS POLICY – Report from Cllr D Suiter.
Cllr D Suiter asked the Clerk to explain.

The Clerk said she had been asked to make some investigations and to amend the draft policy. She had then sent this through to Cllr D Suiter. There were some concerns about this being taken as ‘employment’. Cllr G Titmus said that even if a policy was in place, this did not mean it had to be implemented. After further discussion, it was proposed by Cllr G Titmus and seconded by Cllr B Watson that the draft Volunteer policy be accepted.

Vote 3 for; 5 against; 8 abstentions. The resolution failed, the policy was not adopted.

F&S.11 EASTGATE GARAGES –

- Report from meeting Oct 10th, Chairman/Cllr G Titmus.
- Recommend to accept quotation for future outline planning preparation.

Cllr M Allan said there is a need for a clear recommendation to move this forward.

The Chairman explained that the current application is going to pre planning for demolition in 2 parts. The second (outline) application is to be put in, to replace the tractor sheds.

There was confusion of when the tractor sheds become involved with the planning application.

Cllr D Birks said there was a lateness of realising the tractor sheds were an asset.

Cllr M Allan said the value of the asset may increase but if they get more dilapidated, nearby organisations may wish to purchase it.

It was proposed by Cllr K Fernandes and seconded by Cllr M Allan to demolish the garages only and to make a clear recommendation to this effect to the architect.

Vote – 15 for and 1 abstention. The Resolution was passed.

Action: Planning application to be amended to the garages only being replaced by parking spaces and the Council accept additional costs which will result. The tractor shed to be referred back to services.

F&S.12 'GREEN MACHINE' – Consider whether to purchase a pavement sweeping machine.

Chairman explained this had been resolved by previous Council.

The Clerk clarified several questions.

It was proposed by Cllr M Allan and seconded by Cllr D Andrews to buy a 'Green Machine' with cost as per the report, subject to finding the finance.

Vote – 14 for and 2 abstentions. The Resolution was passed.

Cllr K Fernandes offered another suggestion which will be forwarded to the Services Committee.

Action: Buy Green Machine, subject to finding the finance. KF suggestion to referred to the Services Committee.

F&S.13 'MASTERPLAN ISSUES' - Civic Trust. Letter and leaflet from Civic Trust.

Cllr J Mathieson left the room at 8:35pm
This item was noted and to be considered with item 14.

Cllr J Mathieson returned at 8:37pm.

F&S.14 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

- Report with recommendations – Cllr M Allan.
- Background information.

Cllr M Allan explained the reason for his report.

The Clerk explained and clarified some points and expressed concern regarding staff time availability but some support and administration may be available through the Lincolnshire Community Foundation.

Cllr D Birks thanked the Clerk for very good information and advice. He said he had spoken to the creator of the Localism Act who said a Neighbourhood Plan. Would, by default have to accept the ideals of a Masterplan – which would in STC's case – the Tesco/rail crossing/road/bridge aspects. It was agreed that this would be an important consideration.

Cllr M Allan summed up his recommendation and said a Working Group can meet and find out about grant eligibility. Cllr M Allan also said this may not make any great demands on the STC office.

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

- 1) That the Town Council will develop its own Neighbourhood Plan (to be called The Sleaford Town Plan –TSTP) using the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 with a recorded vote.
- 2) That the Town Council attaches priority in doing so in terms of speed and the use of the Council's resources.
- 3) That a Town Plan Project Delivery group (TPPDG) of 4 Town Councillors be nominated to progress the development of the Plan, support by the Town Clerk, and with delegated authority to deal with the actions contained in these Recommendations.
- 4) That the Project Group reports progress to and obtains any approvals needed from the Council's Application Committee.
- 5) That contact is made with suitable organisations that can assist the council in the development of the Plan obtaining the funding to develop the Plan.
- 6) That an application is made for a grant support from government for development of the Plan.

- 7) That notification is given to NKDC the Council intends to develop a Plan and requests the statutory support from NKDC to do so.
- 8) That the TPPDG bring a first report to the Council's Application Committee detailing the proposed the delivery process for TSTP, the delivery management structure, stakeholder engagement required, any decisions needed and the progress on the actions contained in the above Recommendations.

Recorded Vote – Councillors M Allan, J Charlesworth, I Dolby, B Dunbar-Beckford, K Fernandes, M Graves, G Jackson, H Lorimer, J Mathieson, T Mayfield, D Suiter, G Titmus, D Vere-Critchler and B Watson vote for. Councillors D Andrews and D Birks - abstained.

The Resolution was passed.

Volunteers for the Working Group: Councillors B Watson, M Allan, K Fernandes, G Jackson and G Titmus.

F&S.15 REPORTS FROM VARIOUS STRATEGIC MEETINGS:

- **Sleford Museum Trust** – second meeting of the Sleford Town Museum Project Group.
- **Network Rail.** Report from meeting
- **Visit to a site owned by a proposed Sleford developer.** Report for noting only, as the developer still requests confidentiality.

Referring to the Sleford Museum Trust, Cllr G Titmus explained another meeting had taken place and another quotation is due for the initial building works.

F&S.16 EASTGATE CAR PARK – From last meeting – report from Operations Manager re current car park usage and fees.

The Chairman explained the usage of the Car Park. He said some issues were raised were not appropriate for a public meeting. Cllr D Suiter also said he had some issues to raise.

The Chairman to call a meeting with Councillors D Suiter, M Allan, G Titmus, K Fernandes and the Operations Manager to make further investigations to the usage of the Car Park. Information to be reported to a F&S Meeting.

Action: The Chairman of F&S to call a meeting.

F&S.17 BEST VALUE' PERFORMANCE REVIEW – on (1) Initial letter to neighbouring Town Councils and (2) A suitable questionnaire – recommendations from the working group.

The Clerk explained she had misunderstood the working group report presented to the meeting on the 15th August regarding who was responsible for carrying out the proposals but had subsequently tried to summarise what other Councils do.

Cllr M Allan has drafted a letter to go to neighbouring Town Councils. The Working Group to meet and discuss the proposed questionnaire and agree the next move.

Action: WG to meet.

Cllr M Allan to advise the Clerk regarding the questionnaire for circulation, in readiness for the working group meeting and subsequently presented to F&S January 30th 2013.

Action: MA/Clerk to revise the questionnaire.

F&S.18 MONEY'S YARD TOILETS – Reply received re TC request for an extended lease. NKDC's decision will be too late for TC budget setting.

The letter which had been circulated was noted and the Chairman advised that we should assume continuity and budget accordingly. The Clerk to write expressing disappointment with the time scale given by NKDC.

Action: Clerk to write a letter.

F&S.19 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS, if any.

Vacant properties in Riverside – BW.
Outdoor Litter Vacuum – KF.

F&S.20 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 D Birks.

Vote –16 for. The Resolution was passed.

F&S.21 OFFICE PREMISES – Update on progress, if any, concerning office accommodation. The Clerk explained some progress.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:29pm.