

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
ON TUESDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2016 AT 7.30PM IN THE TOWN HALL.**

PRESENT:

Cllr R J Gell (Chairman)
Cllr D C Lawson MBE
Cllr H L Jackson
Cllr Mrs P H Whiting
Cllr Mrs A M Sauntson
Cllr Mrs V Newbery
Cllr Mrs S Mantle
Mrs S J Mitcham (Town Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Cllr P Tomas

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Other Interests

Cllr Mrs V Newbery- Item 15 ó Use of Town Hall Chamber - Member of the Twinning Association.

Cllr H L Jackson, Cllr Mrs A Sauntson ó Item 15 ó Use of Town Hall Chamber ó Both members of the Twinning Association and Higham Ferrers Tourism.

Cllr R Gell and Cllr Mrs P Whiting ó Item 15- Use of Town Hall Chamber - Members of Twinning Association through their roles as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 8th December 2015 be signed by the Chairman as being a true and correct record.

4. **PUBLIC FORUM (15 minutes)**

No public present.

5. **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the report on the review of risk assessments and the Financial Risk Assessmentø attached to the minutes be approved.

6. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL INTERNAL CONTROLS AND INTERNAL AUDIT.**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That having carried out the annual review of the Councilø Internal Controls and Internal Audit procedures that the documents be adopted.

7. **REVIEW OF ASSET REGISTER**

Clerk was asked to ensure recently purchased flower fountains were included and the charters. The bridges at Riverside Park should be noted on the item for the lease. Clerk to check with insurers as to what cover there was for the bridges in the policy.

RESOLVED:

That the review of the Asset Register for 2015/16 was complete.

8. **REVIEW OF INSURANCE**

As the five year contract had expired with Zurich Municipal prices had been obtained for comparison. The 3 main providers of council insurance had been asked to quote. Aon had made no return call despite two attempts to obtain a quote.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Council remain with Zurich Municipal at a cost of £6181.85, subject to the answers to the outstanding queries received from WPS.

9. **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2016/17**
RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That NCALC Internal Audit Service be appointed as Independent Internal Auditor for 2016/17 and that the Terms of Reference be agreed.

10. **DONATIONS**

10.1. **County Air Ambulance Trust.**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That no donation be made to County Air Ambulance as there was no certainty that monies would benefit Higham Ferrers directly.

10.2. **SERVE.**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That a donation of £500 be made to SERVE toward the expansion of the Handyman Service in Higham Ferrers.

11. **POLICIES**

Sickness Absence Policy.

11.1. **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:**

That the Sickness Absence Policy be reviewed without change.

11.2. **Retirement Policy.**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Retirement Policy be reviewed without change.

11.3. **Standing Orders**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Standing Orders be reviewed without change.

11.4. **Equal Opportunities Policy**

A copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy with proposed amendments had been circulated along with a new separate Staff Equal Opportunities policy.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Equal Opportunities Policy as amended be adopted.

That the Staff Equal Opportunities Policy be adopted.

11.5. **Financial Regulations**

Some minor amendments to the Financial Regulation were proposed and a copy of the regulations with the amendments highlighted had been circulated.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Financial Regulations as amended be adopted.

11.6. **Safeguarding Policy**

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Safeguarding Policy be reviewed without change.

12. **BUSINESS/FORWARD PLAN**

The Clerk presented the report that had been circulated showing progress with projects on the Business Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and noted.

13. **PHONE CONTRACTS**

Costs had been circulated comparing BT with the GPS Telecoms.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Council transfer all lines to BT and continue with the broadband service with BT. Cost £72.70 per month plus £10 package for unlimited calls to National/Local/Mobile numbers. Clerk to compare cost to Virgin Media before the decision was ratified.

14. **FIRE ALARM AND FIRE EXTINGUISHER SERVICING CONTRACTS**

A report had been circulated showing comparative costs for servicing of the fire alarm, emergency lights and fire extinguishers.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Council renew the contract with Northants Fire to undertake the servicing of the fire alarm, emergency lights and fire extinguishers at the Town Hall and the servicing of the emergency lights and fire extinguishers at the Sports Pavilion.

Costs as follows:

- Fire Alarm and Emergency Lights Servicing £115 per visit. (2 visits a year.)
- Redcare Monitoring £277 per annum.
- Fire Extinguishers Town Hall - £2.64 per unit. No attendance fee as linked to fire alarm service
- Fire Extinguishers 6 Sports Pavilion - £2.64 per unit plus £26.40 for visit

This was the not the cheapest quote, but as the lowest quote was so much cheaper and the company was not known members had concerns that the level of service would be not be the same.

15. **USE OF TOWN HALL CHAMBER**

Whilst the Carriage House had been closed Higham Ferrers Tourism and The Twinning Association had been allowed to use the Town Hall for meetings. The Carriage House had now reopened but there was no facility for groups to hold meetings.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That Higham Ferrers Tourism and the Twinning Association, because of their links to the Town Council, be allowed free use of the Town Hall for meetings, subject to a Councillor, who was a keyholder, being present to lock up and set the alarm.

16. **HERITAGE CENTRE**

The Clerk has circulated a detailed report on the proposed Heritage Centre. The only outstanding piece of information was the valuation which was expected by the time of the full Council meeting.

During a discussion the following points were raised:-

- The short length of the proposed lease, which was less than expected and which could impact on the ability to obtain grant funding. This would be an

area that needed negotiation.

- Was there a possibility to purchase the property? Clerk was asking the valuer to provide a valuation for this option as well.
- The Council could spend funds and hand back an improved property to the Duchy of Lancaster at the end of the lease.
- The Council would like to know how much the Duchy of Lancaster would consider contributing. It has been indicated that we need to let them know the shortfall and they would consider assisting.
- There were concerns that the lease indicated that the Council would be responsible for 50% of the driveway.
- Some residents had suggested use of the old garage.
- If the County Council decide to close the library to save money that could possibly be another building.
- The number of responses from the community to the consultation was low.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the report be presented to full Council for consideration.

17. **CLOSURE OF MEETING TO PUBLIC AND PRESS.**

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the following items of business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

18. **SECURITY ALARM**

The Clerk presented a report on the security alarm system which had been in place for some time.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Council accepts the quote of £515.70 to install Dualcom (Grade 3) alarm system from Lynx Fire and Security The cost included the first year's maintenance visits. Second year cost £357.70.

19. **RE-OPEN MEETING TO PUBLIC AND PRESS.**

RESOLVED:

That the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

20. **ITEMS TO REPORT**

No items were raised.

21. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

5th April 2016

Chairman

Date