

## POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held at The Bishop Mascall Centre, Ludlow, on Monday 25th February 2008 at 7.00 pm.

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors Aitken (Chairman), Perks (Vice-Chairman), Bradley, Glaze, Hunt, Kidd, Newbold, Pound and Wilcox

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Richard Walden, Acting Town Clerk and Linda Thomas, Town Clerk designate

### PF5/08 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Perks	Ludlow Marches Partnership	Personal Interest (closely involved with Skillbuilders who receive funding from Partnership)
Cllr Perks	Bird Box scheme	Personal Interest (assisting with scheme)

### PF6/08 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were 3 members of the public present but none raised any matters.

### PF7/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the committee, as now amended, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### PF8/08 ACCOUNTS SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Accounts Sub-Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> February (see Appendix "A"). The Sub-Committee had asked that the use of direct debits or standing orders in the payment of regular accounts be explored. The Committee, however, accepted the advice of the Acting Town Clerk that this was not permitted under S 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Standing Order 28 which require all orders for payment to be first approved by the Council or a Committee and then signed by 2 Councillors. Direct debits were equivalent to the Council approving advance payment of an unknown amount. It was accepted that this was now out of step with modern banking arrangements and the various associations representing local councils were pressing for a change in primary legislation.

Members also noted the commendable initiative of Councillor Davies in promoting a bird box scheme which included members of the public making financial donations against which the Council would be making a payment in due course. The Council's new financial Standing Orders required that any initiatives which involved the receipt or payment of money would require the prior approval of the Council or this Committee.

It was **RESOLVED** – (i) that the minutes of the Accounts Sub-committee be approved



(ii) that the bird box promotion scheme be approved and all Councillors be encouraged to promote similar community initiatives but be reminded of the need to obtain prior approval before their implementation

#### **PF9/08 MARKET ENHANCEMENT**

It was noted that the Market Enhancement Steering group had asked the Consultant Architect to prepare alternative stall layouts for consideration at its next meeting. In order to ensure the receipt of substantial external funds it was essential that speedy progress was made with the scheme. The Committee therefore **AGREED** the following timetable:

3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Steering Group considers alternative stall layouts for consultation
12 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> March	Public and Stakeholder consultation: Display boards at SSDC, Library and Buttercross undercroft (Cllr Perks' offer to make suitable notice/display board gratefully accepted) A4 explanatory leaflet for collection by public and delivery to every stallholder Full page advert in Ludlow Journal Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Services Committee plus other councillors as available to attend exhibition in Harley Centre or similar to explain the scheme and hear public views
17 <sup>th</sup> , 18 <sup>th</sup> or 19 <sup>th</sup> March	Steering Group makes final recommendation in light of consultation response
20 <sup>th</sup> March	Steering group recommendations circulated to all Town Councillors
31 <sup>st</sup> March 7.00pm	Policy and Finance Committee
31 <sup>st</sup> March 8.30pm	Full Council – final approval to scheme and cost estimate

#### **PF10/08 STANDING ORDERS**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the new Standing Orders set out at Appendix "B" be adopted.

#### **PF11/08 STAFF TRAINING**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be authorised to attend the Society of Local Council Clerks' Larger Councils Conference to be held in London on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **PF12/08 REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

It was **RESOLVED** that this Committee concur in the proposal of Services Committee that the additional cost of replacing boats for The Linney not covered by the insurance claim, of £1,400, be met from the Capital Reserve Fund.

#### **PF13/08 REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS**

It was noted that the Newsletter and Website group were inviting quotations from suppliers and would be meeting shortly to consider these. The Remembrance Sunday Working Group would be meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> February and a report would be presented to the next meeting.

#### **PF14/08 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

##### **(a) Ludlow Area Committee**

Councillor Kidd reported on the last meeting of the Committee which continued as one of the pilot area committees arranged by the County Council in advance of Unitary status. The minutes of that meeting, once received, would be circulated to all councillors.



**(b) Ludlow Marches Partnership**

Councillor Perks reported that the work of this particular partnership in the coming year would be to monitor existing projects including the Market Square Enhancement and Millennium Green. He believed that the success of this partnership emphasised the benefit of such arrangements and it was hoped that a new structure could be progressed under the Unitary Authority.

**(c) Shropshire Association of Local Councils**

Councillor Perks reported on the last meeting of the SALC Executive when the primary focus had been the potential opportunities arising from Unitary Shropshire.

**(d) Six Market Towns**

Councillor Perks reported on the meeting hosted by this Council on 21<sup>st</sup> February when the focus once again had been the impact of the Unitary Shropshire. The minutes of the meeting would be circulated to all councillors shortly.

**(e) District Council Standards Board**

Councillor Newbold reported that, although he had been nominated for membership by this Council, there was currently no vacancy so he was waiting until a vacancy arose in the future.

**PF15/08 STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND**

It was noted that the Standards Board had advised that the complainant in a former complaint against a Council member had requested a review of its decision not to investigate. The Board had so reviewed and had concluded that the matter had been handled correctly and the final decision was reasonable. The matter was now considered to be closed.

**PF16/08 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED** that, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.13 pm

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Chairman

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Date