

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 4TH DECEMBER 2006

PRESENT: COUN R CURTIS (CHAIR)

Mesdames: A Laing, M Cartwright
& M Milsom

Messrs: R Kyle, B Scott, G Calvert,
D Coates, H Bennett MBE,
W M Jeffrey, C J Metcalfe, E W Hall
& R Huitson

**PRIOR TO THE START OF THE MEETING MEMBERS WERE
REMINDED OF THE NEED TO DISCLOSE ANY INTEREST,
PREJUDICIAL OR PERSONAL, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
CODE OF CONDUCT.**

104. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Milsom, G Cowie, C Robbins and J I Measor.

105. THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were accepted.



106. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 24TH NOVEMBER 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was adopted.

107. NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE LARGER LOCAL COUNCILS HELD AT THE SLCC CONFERENCE, PLYMOUTH, 19TH OCTOBER 2006

A copy of the Delegate's report following their attendance at this Conference was circulated for each Member's information.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.

108. ELECTION COSTS – RESULTS OF SURVEY

Members were circulated with a copy of information relating to the recovery of costs by District Councils for election services. It was reported that 50% charge the Local Council for everything, 30% charge for disbursements only and 20% pass on no costs whatsoever.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted, and the Town Clerk write to the National Association of Local Councils requesting they take the question of Principal Authorities assisting Local Councils with election costs, be taken up again.

109. FIRST TIER CONSULTATIONS ON HGV APPLICATIONS

Members were circulated with a copy of information relating to the above. It was reported that this was a similar scenario to the issue of Licensing Laws. NALC are looking into this issue nationally and at a local level the Durham Association are trying to persuade District Councils to consult with Local Councils on licensing applications, so far without any degree of success as Councils are sticking to the letter of the law. A Local Member advised that all County Council Members get a list of applications, and the Town Council could ask to be included on the circulation list. *BAJ*

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted and progress be awaited.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the Town Council ask to be put on County Council's circulation list or access information via the County Council's website.

110. PETERLEE REGENERATION PLAN - NOTE OF PRESENTATION BY MR I JENKINSON OF GVA GRIMLEY ON PROGRESS ON STAGE TWO OF THE MASTER PLAN

Members were circulated with a copy of information relating to the above.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted, and that Councillors E W Hall and M Milsom be added to those in attendance at the meeting.

111. PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR 2007/2008

Members were circulated with the formal consultation from the Audit Commission on their proposals for a new auditor. They were proposing to appoint an officer of the Audit Commission (Northern Region) and asked for the Town Councils views.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted and a letter of support be offered to this appointment.

112. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS - 2006 SORP REQUIREMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that due to the significant changes required by the 2006 SORP would have an impact on the way in which the Council's Annual Accounts were presented. The closing of the Accounts had been carried out by Rural Business Solutions and normally any changes would be covered by fees already paid, but unfortunately having to restate last years accounts was a major job

EP

and they were proposing a one off cost of £395.00 to cover this work.

RECOMMENDED that approval be given for RBS to restate the accounts for 2005 / 2006 at a cost of £395.00, be given.

113. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND BUDGET ESTIMATES 2007/08, 2008/09 & 2009/10

The Town Clerk circulated for Members the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Estimates for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10.

RECOMMENDED that a decision on the Budget for 2007 / 2008 and the Medium Term Financial Plan be deferred to the next Council Meeting.

114. FINANCIAL COMPARISON FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL – 30TH SEPTEMBER 2006

The Town Clerk had circulated to Members the financial comparison for the period 1st April to 30th September 2006. The report indicated that with the exception of the Helford Road Schemes actual expenditure / income was in line with the budget.

RECOMMENDED that the report be received.

115. DRAFT DEBT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Circulated for Members was a draft report prepared by the Town Clerk on a Debt Management Strategy.

RESOLVED that the report be agreed, subject to the Councils policy on writing off debts being incorporated within this Strategy.

116. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS & PUBLIC



IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED, THE COMMITTEE PASSED THE FORMAL RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS & PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING, PURSUANT TO THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT, 1961 & THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985.

117. PETERLEE CEMETERY – LIGHTING / CCTV SCHEME

The Town Clerk had circulated to Members a report on a proposed scheme for the installation of CCTV and lighting in the Cemetery.

RECOMMENDED that authority be given for the scheme to proceed immediately, with the Town Council's own staff carrying out the trenching and back filling works.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED that a) authority be given for the scheme to proceed and planning permission be sought immediately, b) plenary powers be granted to accept the lowest or most suitable tender when received and c) an order be placed with NEDL for the installation of the electricity supply cable.

118. ITEC SITE – LIFTING OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANT

The Town Clerk reported that following a meeting with Mr D Ford of Modus Properties the deal for partially lifting the restrictive covenant on the Itec Site was to proceed on the original terms and conditions.

RECOMMENDED that the information given, be noted.

119. LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER

The Town Clerk had circulated to each Member a copy of a letter from the Chief Executive of Durham County Council setting out the County Council's position regarding a unitary structure for local government.

The letter advised during January 2007, the County Council intended working with key partners including Town and Parish Councils to develop a detailed business case for a unitary Council, for submission to Government.

R/b

RECOMMENDED that the letter be received.

120. NEW YEARS EVE GALA NIGHT 2007 – TICKET PRICE

Consideration was given to the pricing of tickets for next year's event.

RECOMMENDED that the ticket price for the above event be set at £23.00 per ticket.

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