

PETERLEE TOWN COUNCIL

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SHOTTON HALL, PETERLEE

ON MONDAY 5TH FEBRUARY 2007

PRESENT: COUN R CURTIS (CHAIR)

Mesdames: A E Laing, J I Measor

Messrs: B Scott, D Coates, A Geldard,
B Joyce, H Bennett MBE, W M Jeffrey,
C J Metcalfe , C Robbins, & R Huitson

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

138. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Milsom, M Milsom, R Jones, G Cowie and T Jones.

139. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Matters Arising

In connection with Minute Number 134 -Development of Peterlee College Site – Advice from the District of Easington, the Town Clerk gave a progress report on information received from the Senior Valuer at the District of Easington following discussions with Northumbrian Water.

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

140. THE REPORT OF THE FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 19TH JANUARY 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was adopted.

141. THE REPORT OF THE YOUTH GROUP HELD ON THE 22ND JANUARY 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was adopted.

142. PETERLEE IMPROVEMENT WORKS – INVITATION TO BRING FORWARD PROJECTS

The Town Clerk had circulated to Members a copy of a letter received from the District of Easington which gave details of projects which had been highlighted by residents as priorities during consultations on the Peterlee Masterplan. The Town Council were invited to identify other projects the Council felt should be added to this priority list. A Local Member suggested that public improved transport around the Town should be given priority consideration.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk respond to the District Council requesting improvements to public transport in Peterlee be added to this list.

143. EASINGTON & DISTRICT CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU – AGM, WEDNESDAY 28TH FEBRUARY 2007, SHOTTON HALL

The Town Clerk reported receipt of an open invitation to all Town Councillors to attend the Citizens Advice Bureau AGM.

Members were asked to let the office know by 13th February 2007 if they wished to attend to allow number attending to be passed on to the CAB Manager.

RECOMMENDED that any Member wishing to attend this meeting advise the Office by 13th February 2007.

144. LOCAL COUNCIL ADVISORY SERVICE RENEWAL

The Town Clerk advised the meeting of the renewal cost for continued membership of this Advisory Service.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council's membership of the above service be renewed for 2007 at a cost of £135.00 + vat.

145. NORTH EAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

The meeting was advised of Membership renewal costs for 2007 of the above organization.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Council renew it's membership of the North East Chamber of Commerce for 2007 at a cost of £228.66 + vat.

PRIOR TO CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM
COUNCILLOR D COATES DECLARED AN INTEREST IN THE
MATTER AND TOOK NO PART IN THE DISCUSSION WHICH
ENSUED.

146. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER AND UNITARY COUNCIL PROPOSALS

The Town Clerk had circulated to Members information received from Durham County Council, the Durham Districts, and NWA Social Market Research regarding Unitary Government Proposals in County Durham.

RECOMMENDED that the documents given above be received.

147. AMENDMENTS TO THE MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR
LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS

The Town Clerk had circulated to each Member a copy of the consultation document for their consideration.

RECOMMENDED that whilst no formal response be made to questions set, the Town Clerk write to the Department of Communities and Local Government expressing the view that once amendments had been made to the Code, these be set out in terms easily understood and giving clarity to what is required of Members.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the Monitoring Officer be requested to give guidance on the alterations to the Code when the amended Code is issued.

148. LICENSING – EXTRACT FROM DIS 647

The Town Clerk gave Members details of information received from County Durham Association of Local Councils which highlighted a recent statement made by the Minister of Culture, Mr Lammy MP regarding the consultation of Town and Parish Councils by Licensing Authorities. The statement confirmed the position that whilst Town and Parish Councils may be interested parties able to make representations on behalf of residents, Parish and Town Councils are not statutory consultees.

The Clerk advised whilst Peterlee Town Council has good consultation arrangements with its Principal Authorities, this is a national issue and many Parish and Town Councils do not have such a good rapport with their Principal Authorities.

RECOMMENDED that the Leader of the Council raise this matter at the next meeting of the National Associations Larger

Local Councils Committee.

149. SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT WORK FOR 2006/2007

A copy of the summary of work completed in 2006/2007 prepared by the Internal Audit Manager at the District of Easington, had been circulated to each Member. The Town Clerk advised that the Estate Manager was currently considering the recommendations made in relation to the Park Attendants Service, and the options available to the Council.

RECOMMENDED that the report be received.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED that the recommendations made in relation to the Park Attendants Service be considered further by the Security Sub Committee.

150. AUDIT COMMISSION – PROPOSED WORK PROGRAMME AND SCALES OF FEES 2007/2008

The Town Clerk advised that if the Scale of Fees as proposed in this document were implemented then the Town Council could anticipate a reduction in the fee for 2007/08 against the 2006/07 fee charges.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.

151. NALC/THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION – ALL ABOUT PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

Members were circulated with a promotional booklet received from the National Association highlighting the role of Local Councils and Councillors together with information on the local elections to be held in May 2007.

RECOMMENDED that the document given above, be received.

152. 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

153. 5 YEARLY REVALUATION OF PREMISES – ASSET MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE VALUATIONS

The Town Clerk advised that as part of the closing of the accounts for 2006/2007, the Council was required to carry out the 5 yearly revaluation of it's property portfolio.

In view of this requirement the Town Clerk suggested this would also be an opportunity to carry out a review of insurance valuations.

RECOMMENDED that the District Valuers Office be engaged to carry out the above revaluation at a cost of £2,500.00 for the asset valuation, and £800.00 for the insurance valuations.

154. IT SUPPORT CONTRACT – EDGE DESIGNS

The Town Clerk advised he had received from Edge Designs of Coventry their revised proposals for the renewal of IT Support Services to the Town Council. The Clerk went on to advise the Council on some of the problems which were currently still outstanding, and his concerns that these problems seemed not to be given the priority he would have anticipated.

In order to maintain IT support the Clerk had entered into a temporary agreement with Edge Designs, on a pro rata basis but suggested that it may be prudent to consider whether alternative support contract providers should be considered.

RECOMMENDED that:-

i) The action of the Town Clerk in entering into a short term agreement for the supply of this IT Support be endorsed.

ii) Investigations into alternative suppliers be made via other Local Councils and a further report be submitted to Committee as soon as possible.

155. CENTRAL AREA FORUM, HASWELL COMMUNITY CENTRE
– 21ST FEBRUARY 2007

Members were requested to submit any items they may have for the above meeting to the Office as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.

156. COMPLIANCE WITH NEW FIRE REGULATIONS

The Town Clerk reported that following receipt of the Consultant's report on compliance with the new fire regulations, the Consultant had recommended the extension of the fire alarm system to first floor offices at Shotton Hall as a matter of urgency.

The Facilities Manager had immediately sought a price for this work from Steadfast Security which had been received in the sum of £680.00 for the supply and installation of 8 additional smoke detectors.

RECOMMENDED that Standing Orders be waived, the quotation from Steadfast Security in the sum of £680.00 be accepted, and plenary powers be granted to allow this work to be completed as soon as possible.

157. HELFDOR ROAD GENERATION 3 TRAINING AREA – CIVIL
ENGINEERING AND ELECTRICAL SERVICES CONSULTANCY

The Town Clerk requested authority to accept the quotation of D.T.A. Consultancy Engineers of Washington for professional civil engineering and electrical engineering services in connection with the above scheme, it being noted DTA having already been appointed for Phase II of this scheme, the main rebuild project.

RECOMMENDED that DTA Engineering services be appointed to provide civil engineering and electrical engineering services for this project on the fees as set out in the scheme proposal submitted.

158. SHOTTON HALL BANQUETING SUITES – REDECORATION INCLUDING FOYERS

The Town Clerk reported three companies had been invited to submit a quotation for this work, and outlined details of the quotations received.

RECOMMENDED that the lowest quotation received from John Elliot Decorators in the sum of £5,786.00, excluding the supply of wallpaper be accepted.

159. ABOLITION OF SOUTHSEA TOWN COUNCIL

Members were advised of the result of the above referendum which was received from Portsmouth City Council, it being noted that only 21.07% of the electorate had voted in this poll.

RECOMMENDED that the information given be noted.