

ALSAGER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE ALSAGER INSTITUTE
ON TUESDAY 11th JANUARY 2011

Present: Councillor W H Stevenson (Chairman)

Councillor C V Burgess
Councillor Mrs D Burgess
Councillor Mrs M Camm
Councillor D I Hough
Councillor W Howell
Councillor R Tyson

Mr. T Fitton (Town Clerk)

1 member of the press

11/01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Burgess and A Snape.

11/02 Minutes of the Meeting – 23rd November 2010

Resolved: That, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee held on 23rd November 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

11/03 Public Participation Period

There were no matters raised by members of the public.

11/04 Love Local Life - Loyalty Card Scheme

David Mc Gifford, Economic Redevelopment Officer Cheshire East Council, introduced the Loyalty Card Scheme, which would enable businesses to give shoppers discounts and savings for shopping locally.

The Scheme, supported by Cheshire East Council, was at present in operation in Macclesfield but it was the intention to increase coverage to the rest of Cheshire East and include local services, such as leisure centres, as well as independent businesses. (Appendix A).

Mandy Fazelynia of Founder of Love Local Life explained the scheme in conjunction with a brief presentation circulated at the meeting which set out:-

- Details of the scheme
- Current situation – 120 partners in Macclesfield
- Benefits for partners
- Supporters
- Marketing and Publicity
- How the scheme would work in Alsager

Mandy indicated that she had arranged to talk to Alsager Chamber of Trade and Alsager Partnership about the introduction of the Loyalty Card Scheme in Alsager.

A discussion then ensued during which councillor's questions were answered and that there would be a possible financial involvement of £2,000 should the Town Council participate in the funding of the scheme.

Resolved: a) That, David and Mandy be thanked for their presentation.

b) That, future consideration of the Town Council's financial involvement in the scheme be discussed pending the receipt of views from Alsager Chamber of Trade and Alsager Partnership.

11/05

Local Service Delivery

Further to Min. 10/77 dated 23rd November 2010, the Chairman reported on the meeting of the Negotiating Team held on Friday 7th January 2011.

The Council's Consultant Architect had presented his report setting out works of planned maintenance of repair together with capital costs based on the information contained within the Disability Access Audit, the Building Control Survey and the Type 2 Asbestos Survey as instructed by Alsager Town Council in 2009 by Property Tectonics of Manchester.

The team also discussed the financial and site information provided by the Secretary of Alsager Allotment Society in relation to allotments in Alsager.

It was noted that the first negotiating meeting with Cheshire East Council was to be held on 4th February 2011 followed by a joint meeting with neighbouring towns and parishes involved with Transfer Negotiations on 16th February 2011.

The next meeting of the Negotiating Team was scheduled to meet on Friday 28th January 2011 to discuss the strategy for the forthcoming meeting with Cheshire East Council.

Resolved: That, the Chairman's report be received and noted.

11/06

Formula Grants Settlement

Resolved: That, the Town Clerk's report giving details of the Coalition Government's reduction in the Formula Grant Settlement for 2011/12, and indicating that the grant to Cheshire East Council had been reduced by 1.6%, be received and noted.

Localism Bill

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's report on the Coalition Government's Localism and Decentralisation Bill published in December 2010.

The Bill included the following measures:

- A new power for local people to approve or veto excessive council tax rises through a local referendum, but with the intention that the majority of local councils will fall below the level set by the Secretary of State;
- A right for local councils – as well as voluntary and community groups, social enterprises and local authority employees delivering a service – to challenge a local authority, by expressing an interest in running any service for which they are responsible;
- The chance for communities to develop a bid and raise the capital to buy a local community asset when it comes on the open market;
- Measures to give people, councillors and councils the power to instigate a local referendum on any local issue;
- A new general power of competence to provide local authorities – including certain local councils – to enable them to do anything apart from that which is specifically prohibited;
- Freeing up councillors to be able to campaign, to express views on issues and to vote on those matters, without fear of being unjustly accused of have a closed mind on a particular issue;
- The abolition of the Standards Boar regime;
- Changes to the community infrastructure Levy including provisions requiring some of these funds to be passed to neighbourhoods where the development has taken place;
- A new right for local councils to shape their local areas through neighbourhood plans which will enable communities to permit development – in full or in outline – without the need for planning applications;
- The power for communities to take forward development in their area without the need to apply for planning permission, subject o meeting certain safeguards and securing 50 per cent support of the community through a referendum.

Debate ensued on the financial and other issues in the Bill and it was:-

Resolved: That, the report be received and there were no further financial issues to be brought to the attention of the Town Council when the matter is to be discussed at the meeting to be held on 18th January 2011.

Financial Issues

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's report on the following issues since the last meeting:

Precept Information – national statistics showed Alsager in 2011/12 would be below the Band D average in England.

Council Tax Freeze – Local Town/Parish Councils have been excluded from the scheme leaving our independent precepting powers intact.

New Payments Code – The Coalition Government is proposing to repeal the provision in the Local Government Act 1972 that required cheques to be signed by 2 Members in order for councils to make use of the range of modern payment methods now available.

Section 137 Grants Limit 2011/12 – The Limit for Town Council's in England for 2011/12 is increased from £6.15 to £6.44 per elector.

Resolved: That, the report be received and the information noted.

11/09

Alsager Town Guide

The Committee considered a request from Plus Publishing Services regarding the production of a new Town Guide.

The current Town Guide covers the period of 2009 – 2011 and it was noted that much of the information was now available on the Town Council's website.

Resolved: a) That, the offer from Plus Publishing to produce a further edition of the Town Guide to be declined.

b) That the matter be deferred for consideration during the Budget exercise 2012/13.

11/10

Budget Monitoring Statement to 30th November 2010

Resolved: That, the Budget Monitoring Statement of estimated income and expenditure to 30th November 2010 be received and noted.

11/911

Accounts for Authorisation

Resolved: That, the report be received, the income noted and the payments authorised. (Appendix B)

The meeting commenced at 7.20pm and concluded at 8.15pm.

Councillor W H Stevenson
Chairman