

ALSAGER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE ALSAGER INSTITUTE
ON TUESDAY 21st SEPTEMBER 2010

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 A Snape

Mr. T Fitton (Town Clerk)

1 member of the press

10/57 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

10/58 Minutes of the Meeting – 20th July 2010

Resolved: That, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purpose Committee held on 20th July 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10/59 Public Participation Period

There were no matters raised by members of the public.

10/60 Local Service Delivery

Further to Min. 10/48 dated 20th July 2010 and 10/137 of the Council Meeting held on 7th September 2010, the Chairman reported that together with the Chairman of the Council and the Town Clerk, he would attend the presentation by Cheshire East Council on 5th October 2010 at Congleton Town Hall.

A date for a consultative meeting with the Town Council is awaited from Cheshire East Council.

Resolved: That, the report be received and noted.

10/61 Town Council Information Service

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk containing the results of a customer survey conducted between 7th June and 23rd August 2010 indicating visitor numbers to the Town Council Offices at 3 Lawton Road, following the transfer of Cheshire East Council's Information Point to Alsager Library.

Consideration was given to the Council's Information Policy, including the nature of the Information Service to be offered and how an Information Service would best be delivered.

Resolved: That, the matter be deferred pending further information regarding Local Service Delivery to enable the financial implications to be assessed on the Budget for 2011/12.

10/62 Publicity of Expenditure over £500

Resolved: That, notification of the intention of the Department of Communities and Local Government for all local authorities to publish individual items of expenditure over £500 be received and noted and further information awaited.

10/63 Abolition of the Audit Commission

The Town Clerk reported that the Audit Commission, the independent body charged with auditing the finances of local and public services, was to be abolished as part of the Coalition Government's plans to save money.

It was anticipated that this audit function would now return to the private sector. The Audit Commission's Audit Fee was previously £875 (including VAT) and it was hoped that the cost would not increase under any new service arrangements.

Resolved: That, the report be received.

10/64 Accounts for Authorisation

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

10/65 Budget Monitoring Statement to 30th September 2010

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

10/66 Christmas Tree 2010

Resolved: a) That, confirmation that Cheshire East Council was to supply the traditional Christmas Tree outside the Civic Centre this year was received and noted.

b) That, entry into the Christmas Tree Festival 2010 at Wesley Place Methodist Chapel be approved.

10/67 Northholme Gardens

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk giving details of a renovation scheme for Northholme Gardens prepared by the Alsager Partnership costing £5000 and requiring a contribution from the Town Council towards the work.

There then followed a comprehensive debate on the scheme and the financial implications for the 2011/12 Budget and it was:-

Resolved: That, subject to approve of the renovation scheme by Cheshire East Council and confirmation that Alsager Partnership had secured other funding, the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee in conjunction with the Town Clerk, be given delegated authority to release funds within the financial limits of the £2156 earmarked provision as the Town Council's contribution to the project.

NOTE: Councillor D I Hough abstained from voting on the decision.

10/68 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That, in accordance with the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of private and confidential information.

10/69 Civic Financial Arrangements

The Committee considered the private and confidential report of the Town Clerk regarding the following issues:-

- Changes to the Financial accounting arrangements in relation to the Chairman's Allowance
- Legal requirements for the issue of free tickets to Civic Occasions including the Annual Civic Ball and Dinner.

Resolved: a) That, the Town Council be recommended to adopt the change in financial procedure for the Chairman's Allowance, the Financial Regulations amended accordingly and the new procedure implemented retrospectively at the start of the 2010/11 Civic Year.

b) That, it be noted that the Chairmen of local councils in Cheshire East would in future follow the practice of offering to pay the face value of the tickets when invited to a Civic function.

c) That, the Chairman's Allowance for 2011/12 be revised accordingly.

d) That, in future the Town Council be recommended to adopt a policy of providing no free tickets for its Annual Civic Dinner and Ball.

e) That, persons actively working at the Civic Ball to receive a compensatory additional payment in recognition of their services.

NOTE: Councillors D I Hough and W Howell (Chairman) abstained from voting on this decision.

10/70

Offices – 3 Lawton Road Alsager

The Committee considered the private and confidential report of the Town Clerk regarding the leasing of the offices at 3 Lawton Road Alsager from Cheshire East Council.

The report contained financial details of the current and future rent and service charges.

Cheshire East Council had placed the building on the Disposal List but a further 3 year leased had been offered.

Resolved: a) That, the 3 year extension to the existing lease for office accommodation at 3 Lawton Road be accepted on the terms and conditions contained in the report.

b) That, alternative leasing options be considered as and when further information becomes available from Cheshire East Council.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and concluded at 8.15pm.

Councillor W H Stevenson
Chairman