

At a Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on Wednesday 3rd July 2013, at the Civic Offices, Wellington Road Community Centre, Rhyl commencing at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor P. Prendergast (Chair)

Councillors I. A. Armstrong, B. Blakeley, Mrs J. Butterfield MBE, Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones, Mrs E. M. Chard, Ms J. Hughes, A. R. James, Mrs P. M. Jones, Mrs M. McCarroll, B. Mellor, Mrs W. M. Mullen-James, S. H. Ratcliffe, Miss S. L. Roberts, A. J. Rutherford, Miss R. Siddall and D. Simmons.

[N.B. Councillor Miss C. L. Williams was in the building but could not access the Council Chamber due to a locked door.]

Mr G. J. Nickels - Town Clerk
Mr R. A. Hughes - Finance Officer
Miss H. J. Windus - Personal Assistant & Secretary

20. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received on behalf of Councillors J. May (work commitment), B. F. Moylan (work commitment) and W. N. Tasker (work commitment).

21. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – 1ST QUARTER (1st April – 30th June 2013)

The Finance Officer presented his report (circulated with Agenda) which was an enhanced version of what Members were used to receiving from his predecessor.

In summary the Council was just 0.11% over budget and below the precept amount, and the amenity services overspend of £12,460 is almost completely offset by the underspend on employees and civic expenditure.

The Finance Officer responded to Members' questions.

A Member requested that consideration be given to purchasing Tablets for all Town Councillors to continue to make the savings the Council had made in sending all documents electronically to its Members who were County Councillors with i-pads provided to them by Denbighshire.

RESOLVED that the report be approved with thanks to the Finance Officer.

22. INVESTMENT OF EXCESS CASH REPORT

The Finance Officer submitted his report (circulated with Agenda) seeking Members' authority to contact the four institutions referred to in his report to establish their investment rates and to delegate him the authority to make a decision on how best

to invest the Council's money and advise it of the outcome at the next available meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- i) authority be granted to the Finance Officer to proceed, as requested.
- ii) the Finance Officer be instructed to invest the amounts ethically.

FURTHER RESOLVED that Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Finance Officer to act as a matter of urgency.

23. PROPOSED RHYL TOWN COUNCIL INITIATIVE RE: PARKING

Further to Minute No.184 of the meeting held on 3rd April 2013, the Chair invited Councillor Mrs J. Butterfield MBE to verbally report on a potential initiative.

Councillor Butterfield advised that Councillor D. Simmons and herself had met with the relevant officers of Denbighshire County Council some time ago, but since then those officers had been subject to a reorganisation and were no longer holding the posts.

The Councillors asked if they could report to a future meeting after they had gathered all of the necessary facts and figures.

RESOLVED that Councillors Butterfield and Simmons report to a future meeting.

24. TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVE

The Chair advised that in agreement with the Town Council's representative on the group, Councillor A. J. Rutherford, this item would be moved to later on the Agenda for debate under confidential session.

RESOLVED that the item be moved accordingly.

25. CONSULTATION: WELSH GOVERNMENT – LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) MEASURE 2011, PART 7 COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The Chair reported receipt of the above document (circulated with Agenda) relating to proposed statutory advice to be issued by the Welsh Government in respect of implementation of sections of Part 7 of the 2011 Act.

One of the Town Council's representatives on the North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils (NWAT&LCC), Councillor Mrs J. Butterfield MBE, advised that this matter was to be fully explored at the NWAT&LCC's conference on Friday 19th July and that the outcome would be fed back to the Welsh Government.

RESOLVED that the document be received.

26. INFORMATION: IT MAINTENANCE AND PHOTOCOPIER

The Finance Officer presented his report (circulated with Agenda) advising that the Council's current IT provision was due for review in October and that the photocopier lease should have been re-tendered in March but had been extended on a rolling six month basis for a further two years, due to the Council not having a Finance Officer in post at that time.

The Finance Officer advised that he intended to test the market for both during the August recess and report back to this Committee in September.

RESOLVED that the Finance Officer be instructed to proceed and report back to the Committee in September.

27. INFORMATION: REVIEW OF RHYL TOWN COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS, CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Town Clerk and the Finance Officer submitted their report (circulated with Agenda) giving Members advance notice of their intention to review and revise the above documents over the August recess period to reflect current legislation and recommended best practice.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk and the Finance Officer to report to the Committee in September for Council Standing Orders and October for Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders detailing the necessary changes.

28. CONSULTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – REVIEW OF FAITH SCHOOL PROVISION

The Chair reported receipt of the above document (circulated with Agenda) asking Members to consider the Phase One proposals to close Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School and St. Brigid's School on 31st August 2014 and, in partnership with the Catholic Diocese of Wrexham and the Church in Wales Diocese of St. Asaph, establish a new Anglican and Catholic Faith Voluntary Aided School serving Denbigh, Rhyl and the surrounding areas on the existing sites from 1st September 2014.

The Town Clerk suggested that the Council considered forming a Task Group to go into the proposals in more detail if it did not support them, but that if it did support them then at this stage a simple "yes" would suffice.

Members raised the concerns of parents and the wider community around the proposals, particularly surrounding the loss of such good quality schools and the increase in travel costs to the new school for the families from the area losing the provision.

Members made the case for the location of the new school to be here in Rhyl where land was available, and raised strong concern about the objectivity of the report, which they believed to be "flawed" and felt did not lend itself to being a truly meaningful and effective consultation document.

Members referred to copies of document written by the 'Keep Faith in Rhyl' group and Chris Ruane M.P. which had scrutinised the proposals and found a number of inaccuracies and omissions within it.

Other Members stated that they could not put their weight behind the 'Keep Faith in Rhyl' document as they had not seen it.

The Town Clerk asked for a copy of all the documents being referred to by Members and suggested that he construct a response from all of the information available and e-mail it to all Councillors for them to approve or otherwise before he submits it to Denbighshire County Council.

RESOLVED *that the Town Clerk's suggestion be approved.*

29. PRESENTATIONS FROM RHYL GOING FORWARD

The Town Clerk sought Members' authority to include a standing item on future Agendas for regular presentations from Rhyl Going Forward project officers.

RESOLVED *that the standing item be approved.*

30. INFORMATION ITEM: NWAT&LCC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Town Clerk advised of the North Wales Association of Town and Larger Community Councils' (NWAT&LCC) important annual conference on Friday 19th July, which he would normally attend along with the Council's representatives, Councillors Mrs J. Butterfield MBE, Mrs J. Chamberlain-Jones and D. Simmons, but on this occasion both he and Councillor Chamberlain-Jones were unable to.

The Town Clerk asked Members to consider appointing two alternative Councillors to attend the conference.

RESOLVED *that Councillors Mrs P. M. Jones and A. R. James be nominated to attend.*

31. INFORMATION ITEM: SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

The Town Clerk advised of the above initiative and asked Members if they would like to invite representatives from Housing and Community Development to a future meeting to hear how the grants would be applied for and distributed.

The Finance Officer reported that he had had a conversation with their Business Investment Officer who had said that they would come to Council looking for a steer on how to score the applications.

RESOLVED *that the Town Clerk to invite Housing and Community Development to a future meeting.*

32. INFORMATION ITEM: RHYL'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk was pleased to report that the Council's Champions Councillors B. Blakeley and A. R. James had withdrawn their resignations and would continue in their appointed roles.

33. INFORMATION ITEM: TICKETS FOR FREE SESSIONS AT MARSH TRACKS

Councillor Mrs M. McCarroll advised that she had 40 tickets and posters for each school and asked each School Governor to take them into their respective schools for the schools to distribute them on a first come first served basis.

34. SMART GROUP PROGRESS REPORT

The Chair invited the Lead Member of the SMART Group, Councillor A. J. Rutherford, to take Members through his report (circulated with Agenda) and the recommendations within it with regard to the Council's Annual Grants Scheme.

Councillor Rutherford explained the proposed scoring mechanism devised by the Group and suggested that the Group be permitted to score each application received anonymously before bringing their recommendations to this Committee for its approval.

The Finance Officer added that application forms would be sent out in August and that the SMART Group would score them in September with a view to the grants being released in October.

Members thanked the members of the SMART Group for the huge amount of work they had put into this report and congratulated them on an impressive document.

RESOLVED *that all of the recommendations in the report be approved.*

35. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED *that the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, on the grounds of confidentiality.*

36. ILLUMINATIONS

The Town Clerk advised on the current position in respect of the purchase of the former Leased illuminations.

The Town Clerk circulated a response from the Manager of the White Rose Centre, Mr Richard Henderson, to his letter sent on 24th May asking for his assistance with matters relating to the Centre's Christmas Tree and Defibrillator provision for Members' information.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk to contact Blachere Illuminations to enquire about an artificial tree and report back to the Committee.

37. TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP – REPORT OF REPRESENTATIVE

Councillor A. J. Rutherford circulated copies of his confidential report, bringing Members up to speed with the progress of the Town Centre Manager post.

RESOLVED that the Council:

- i) *agrees with the proposal to change the Town Centre Manager post's employer from Rhyl City Strategy to Denbighshire County Council.*
- ii) *agrees with ring fencing a town centre events budget to be organised by Denbighshire County Council to enable the Town Centre Manager to focus on town centre issues.*
- iii) *agrees with the proposal to hold Town Centre Management Group (TCMG) meetings every quarter rather than every month.*
- iv) *asks its representatives (Councillors A. R. James and A. J. Rutherford) to request a balance sheet from the TCMG.*

38. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed.

Chair:

Date: