

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 21ST NOVEMBER 2007

PRESENT

Mr. Steeples presided over Mesdames Harrison and Holmes, Messrs. Mackin and Coward.

1. APOLOGIES

Messrs. Gray and Wren.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. REPORT FROM INSPECTOR WHITTRED – BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE

The committee had previously asked Inspector Whittred for an appraisal as to the overall effectiveness of PCSO's within the police framework with a view to setting their annual precept. The appraisal has now been received. Inspector Whittred felt that the deployment PCSO's had been a very worthwhile initiative within the various communities throughout the country providing good working relationships with the youth of a town and also providing a more visible presence. However, it should be noted that figures relating to their impact on the reduction of crime were not provided – if indeed that was even possible.

4. DONATION REQUEST – MID BEDS CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

The Mid Beds Citizens Advice Bureau has written to the committee to request funding towards their home visiting outreach service. The committee felt that this was a very worthwhile addition to the excellent service they already provide.

It is **RECOMMENDED** to full Council that £500 be given now with the proviso that a further £500 will be given at a later date if the District Council contributes a significant financial amount to the Bureau.

It is to be suggested to the Bureau that they should contact any appropriate County Councillors as they may also have finance for such initiatives.

5. CCTV REVIEW

Information and a sample contract have been received from the District Council's Community Services Manager. Certain of the appendices mentioned were not actually included with the information, therefore, the said Officer is to be contacted to arrange a meeting to discuss the full impact of a CCTV partnership with the District Council.

6. EU REFERENDUM

It had been previously suggested that the committee should contact the District Council with a view to organizing a poll to stage an EU Referendum. However, the National Association of Local Councils has advised that Town/Parish Councils should not concern themselves with political matters but should concentrate on local issues. It was decided not to progress this suggestion as the costs of carrying out a poll would ultimately be passed on to Council Tax payers.

7. REPORT FROM BEDS POLICE

The second management report has been received from Police Sgt. Denham regarding the current work of the Neighbourhood Policing Team. The report included information on various communities within Bedfordshire, namely, Ampthill, Flitwick, Shefford, Woburn and Cranfield. The comments appertaining to arrests, vehicle crime and related vehicle offences in Shefford were noted accordingly.

8. GRATUITY – PREVIOUS CLERK

The Council's External auditors still have not replied to a request for assistance regarding payment of the previous clerk's gratuity despite three letters seeking their guidance.

The committee has now decided to adhere to the advice of the solicitors and HM Revenue & Customs. The clerk is to send a letter to the said auditors expressing the committee's frustration and annoyance at their appalling and unhelpful attitude.

9. TARIFF – ELECTRICITY SUPPLY TO PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Council's current contract with E.ON Energy to supply electricity to the public conveniences is due to expire on 31st December 2007. The clerk is to seek quotations from other suppliers in order to establish the best rate.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Mayor has received a letter from the Acorn Pre-school Group informing both him and the members that they have appointed Dawsons (Shefford) Ltd to build the new pre-school and work commenced on Monday 19th November 2007. A note thanking the members for their consideration and donation has also been received.

It was suggested that perhaps consideration should be given to setting up a reserve towards having a museum in the town. It was further suggested that perhaps residents might also like an opportunity to contribute.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.