

425/2008 BUDGET REVIEWS

425.1 To review Finance and Administration Committee budgets

Members expressed concerns that the figures had not been circulated until the meeting; they appreciated that the current office situation had created difficulties.

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk would organise a training session on budgets and the financial papers of the Council. [Clerks note: training session 16/09/08 at 7.30pm]

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

425.2 To review all Committee budgets

Chairmen of Committees were asked to undertake a review of their budgets at their next meeting.

ACTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

426/2008 TO DISCUSS THE FORMAT AND CONTENT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER DUE SEPT. 2008

A report on the newsletter was circulated at the meeting by Cllr. Smith and Cllr. Mordue. Members noted the report and following a discussion **AGREED** the report's recommendations "that the layout in the report be agreed as the format and content of the next Town Council Newsletter, that copy be provided to Cllr. Smith by Friday 12th September, that the Editorial Board meet during the latter part of week commencing 15th September, and that the final draft be submitted for printing during the week commencing 22 September."

ACTION CLLR. SMITH, CLLR. MORDUE, CLLR. TRY

427/2008 TO DISCUSS THE CREATION OF A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Members were reminded that this item had originated from Finance & Administration Committee minute no 394/2008 "*Members discussed the formation of a Communications Strategy Group; it was agreed to place this on the agenda for the Finance & Administration meeting on the 26th August 2008.*"

Members discussed at length the need for a communication strategy, its format and how it would be implemented. Members noted that all Chairmen could issue a press release on specific items after their meetings.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** by 7 votes to 1 that the formation of the communications strategy and the appointment of a press officer should be deferred in view of the current staffing levels; the discussion should include both internal and external communications. The item to be placed on the 1st December Finance and Administration Committee Meeting for discussion.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

428/2008 TO DISCUSS BUCKINGHAM ROTARY CLUB'S REQUEST FOR A LINK FROM OUR WEBSITE TO THEIRS.

It was **AGREED** to pass the request over to Buckinghamuk.info web site as Members did not believe that it was appropriate to put a link to a club on the current Town Council web site.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

429/2008 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE THE APPOINTMENT OF A PRESS OFFICER AND AGREE TERMS OF REFERENCE.

This was deferred: see minute no. 427/2008.

430/2008 TO DISCUSS TRAINING COURSES AVAILABLE

VAT – The Complexities of Local Government VAT, £95 + VAT + Travel 2/12/08 & Continuity Management £130 + VAT + Travel 3/11/08.

Due to the current staffing issues it was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk would not attend the above courses this year.

431/2008 TO REVIEW THE CHEQUE SIGNATORIES

The current cheque signatories are Cllr. Mordue, Cllr. Stuchbury, Cllr. P. Collins, Cllr. Isham, and Cllr. Loftus. A query was raised as to who had put this on the agenda; it was felt that the initiating Councillor should be identified.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Stevens, and **AGREED** that the initiating Councillor should be identified on the agenda where appropriate.

Following a discussion on the merits of who should sign the cheques and the procedure involved Members agreed to **RECOMMEND** that the cheque signatories should be named Councillors based on the 4 Standing Committee Chairmen, the Mayor and another Councillor.

Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Whyte, and **RECOMMENDED** by 10 votes to 0 that Cllr. Smith should replace Cllr. Loftus.

Proposed by Cllr. Mordue, seconded by Cllr. Stevens and **RECOMMENDED** by 9 votes to 0 that Cllr. Whyte should be added to the cheque signatories list.

It was agreed to **RECOMMEND** that the Financial Standing orders should be amended to reflect the above decisions and also to show that where possible the Chairman of the initiating Committee should be one of the Councillors who sign the cheque.

432/2008 TO RECEIVE LETTER FROM HMC&E FOLLOWING THEIR VISIT ON 14/5/08; AND RECEIVE DETAILS OF PARTIAL EXEMPTION CALCULATIONS.

A copy of the letter from the VAT officer at HMC&R had been circulated with the agenda. Unfortunately additional information that had been requested of them in respect of checking the categories of some payments had not been received so although the calculations were in a draft mode they could not be completed. Members noted that the VAT inspection had taken place on 14th May but the letter of detail had not been received until 11th August 2008. Members **AGREED** that the Town Clerk should seek an outside source for VAT advice.

433/2008 TO REVIEW INTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS IN RESPECT OF COUNCILS DAY TO DAY MANAGEMENT

Copy of the internal audit and risk assessment was circulated with the agenda. In response to a question the Town Clerk explained that the internal audit process and risk assessment was a statutory requirement. The document shows the type of risk and the controls in place to manage that risk, this is separate from the Financial regulations which are the rules governing the councils financial transactions.

Proposed by Cllr Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr Collins and **AGREED** to accept the Internal Audit and Risk Assessment with adjustments agreed in respect of cheque signatories

434/2008 TO RECEIVE PRELIMINARY REPORT ON TIMESHEET ANALYSIS

The Town Clerk had circulated at the meeting a interim time sheet analysis, this was a rough draft to enable Members to see how the office time was split; a more detailed report and analysis would be provided for the next meeting. Members noted the analysis and the verbal report from the Clerk. Concern was expressed that the office staff sometimes came under verbal abuse from members of the public. It was agreed to copy the rough timesheet analysis to all members on an A3 sheet of paper.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

435/2008 TO RECEIVE A REQUEST FOR BUCKINGHAM YOUTH CENTRE FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

A copy of the letter of request and the Town Clerk's email to the Buckingham Youth Club had been circulated with the agenda. Members discussed at length the history of the underwriting funding for the Youth Centre and its inclusion in Contingencies. Members were in principle supportive of the funding request but felt there was insufficient information to make a decision. It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk seek the information and the item be placed on the next Council Meeting.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

436/2008 TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF THE REVISED QUALITY PARISH STATUS SCHEME.

Details of the revised scheme had been circulated with the agenda. Members agreed that it was important for the Town Council to maintain the Quality Parish Status particularly as we were the first in Buckinghamshire.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Smith, and **AGREED** by 10 votes to 0 that the Town Council would apply for reaccreditations by 31st December 2008; the Town Clerk to provide an action list and programme schedule for the portfolio required.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

437/2008 TO DISCUSS ACTION POINTS INCLUDED IN THE LARGER LOCAL COUNCIL REPORT.

The Larger Local Council's report had been circulated to all Members with the Council agenda for 2nd June 2008 but was not considered by the Council till 18th August 2008; the Clerk explained that some items had changed.

437.1 To review all policies after Oct 2008 Employment Law changes

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk and Cllr. Newell would review all Employment Policy documents in light of the proposed changes in October 2008 and bring the revised versions to a future Finance and Administration Committee Meeting.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK, CLLR. NEWELL

437.2 Create a leave policy covering holiday and sickness

The Town Clerk and Cllr. Newell would formulate a draft policy based on the sector's practice and bring a draft to a future Finance and Administration Committee Meeting.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK, CLLR. NEWELL

437.3 Investigate the creation of a Staffing Committee to deal with Personnel issues.

The Clerk would compile a report for a future meeting.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

437.4 Investigate the buying in of expert services such as HR Services, Health & Safety risk assessment.

The Town Clerk would investigate the purchasing of expert services on an 'as required' basis and report back to the Committee.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

437.5 Create a Council Constitution including all of the Town Council policies

It was explained that the constitution was a document detailing all the policies and procedures of the Council, how the Council is run and its terms and conditions.

This would be compiled as time and work loads allow.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

437.6 Create policies; Member / Officer Protocol, Confidential Information Policy, Public Complaints Policy & Procedures, Corporate Risk Management Policy, Management Plan

Members accepted the importance of having the policies and felt these should be compiled when time and work loads allow.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

Proposed by Cllr. Smith seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** that of the above actions 437.1, 437.2, 437.4 would be priority; Action 437.3 as time allows; and Actions 437.5, 437.6 are aspirational and would be carried out as work load allows.

438/2008 TO REVIEW THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS.

A copy of the current financial regulations and the proposed changes were circulated with the agenda. Members discussed the amendments and proposed that they were **RECOMMENDED** to the Council subject to the following alterations

5.3 include the earlier discussions on cheque signatories

11.3.2 “have executive powers” changed to “determine the acceptable quotation”

11.3.4 “price” be changed to “value”

439/208 CHAIRMAN’S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

439.1 Future agenda item

It was agreed to include the insurance cover review on a future agenda.

439.2 Deputy Town Clerk Vacancy

Following the expiry of the 2 weeks grace to withdraw her resignation Members agreed that the Town Clerk should carry out the Council’s wish to advertise the post using current documentation; the Town Clerk would circulate the documentation to Chairmen for their information. The post would be advertised in the *Bucks. Herald* and *Buckingham Advertiser*, in NALC’s Direct Information Service and on the SLCC web site. The Clerk would ask Bucks CC, AVDC, and MK Council if they would include it on their internal ‘situations vacant’.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

Meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

CHAIRMAN DATE