

Draft Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held at 7.45 pm on 11 November 2013 in the Roysse Room, Guildhall, Abingdon-on-Thames.

Present

Cllr Sandy Lovatt	Chairman
Cllr Alison Rooke	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Marilyn Badcock	
Cllr Michael Badcock	Chairman of Planning & Highways Committee
Cllr Iain Littlejohn	Chairman of Audit & Performance Sub-Committee
Cllr Monica Lovatt	
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	Chairman of County Hall Museum Management Committee
Cllr Patrick Lonergan	
Cllr Helen Pighills	Chairman of Amenities & Recreation Committee
Cllr Samantha Bowring	Mayor of Abingdon (Ex-officio)

In Attendance

Cllr Jason Fiddaman	
Cllr Angela Lawrence	
Cllr Lesley Legge	
Cllr Hermann Matheson	
Cllr Aidan Melville	
Cllr Katie Nobes	
Cllr Lorraine Oates	
Cllr Andrew Todd	
Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk
Mrs Sandra Hill	Deputy Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)

F27 Apologies

There were no apologies.

Note: apologies for absence are only recorded in relation to Members of the Committee.

F28 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

F29 Statements and Questions from the Public

The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr Sandy Lovatt, suspended Standing Orders to enable Dr Les Clyne (member of the public) and Cllr Dr Jim Halliday (who addressed the Committee as a representative for the residents from the nearby properties). Both parties spoke in relation to item 5 on the agenda: Guildhall Improvement Programme.

Cllr Jim Halliday stated that as the Guildhall's nearest neighbours they are keen to see the facility develop in a sustainable and careful manner.

They welcome the recent levels of improved communication from the Town Council, and the recent Daylight and Sunlight Report, and urge that this continues.

They request that the Council advise them when the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application is available to them. They also understand that the plans may have altered since they last received a set on 18 July 2013.

They have noted that the Town Council have been careful to describe the displays and surveys carried out in April 2013 as a 'Public Engagement' exercise, and therefore ask when the Town Council would be formally consulting on their proposals as now required under the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Dr Les Clyne expressed concern over the escalating costs; initially these were between £2.5m and £3.5m but have now risen, without public consultation, to between £3.8m and £4.5m. He stated that he felt this is against what the public want now, and that the tax payer would have to bear the costs. He notified the Committee that he intends to write to the HLF to ask them not to approve HLF funding.

F30 **Staffing policy documents**

Members considered and **adopted** the reviewed and new council policies – subject to a few minor amendments.

F31 **Guildhall Improvement Programme**

The Town Clerk apologised for the late delivery of his report; he explained that he was not able to complete the report until after the HLF meeting which took place on Friday 8 November 2013. He highlighted that there may be a need to switch between the Open Agenda and the Confidential Agenda.

The Town Clerk spoke to his previously distributed report, section by section.

Members considered the report and following full discussion it was unanimously **recommended** to Town Council:

(i) to agree that the Council agree to raise a sum of £1,500,000 towards the Guildhall Improvement Project phase 2, this not including any grant from HLF or the sum of £1,000,000 already allocated from the Guildhall Capital Improvement Sum (deferred grant).

(ii) that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the development group (Cllrs Iain Littlejohn and Julie Mayhew-Archer) and the review group (Cllrs Sandy Lovatt and Alison Rooke):

(a) to submit an application to the HLF for a grant under the Enterprise Fund programme of less than £2 million.

On going to the vote for (ii) (b) there were 9 in Favour, 0 Against and 1 Abstention and therefore **recommended** to Town Council:

(b) to submit an application to the HLF based on the core scheme with enhancements to be included from the list submitted as a confidential paper and any other such enhancements as are considered necessary on further review, subject to these being contained within a maximum project cost of £4,450,000.

On going to the vote it was unanimously **recommended** to Town Council:

- (iii) that subject to a successful grant application to the HLF, the Project then enters the development period, it being noted that at the end of this period the Project will be reviewed by the Council prior to a decision then being made regarding submitting a stage two HLF application to proceed to the delivery stage.

The meeting rose at 8.30pm.