

Minutes of the Meeting of the **FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** held at the Town Hall, Swanage on **MONDAY, 10th MARCH 2008** at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:- Councillor G.M. Suttle (Town Mayor) – Chairman.

Councillor L. Gloyn-Cox
Councillor Mrs. A. Patrick
Councillor M.W. Pratt

Also in attendance:- Councillor M. Whitwam
Mr. H. Lovegrove – Internal Auditor
(from 10.25 a.m.)

Public Participation Time

There was one member of the public present at the meeting.

MRS. SKINNER, a caravan owner at the Swanage Bay View Holiday Park, referred to the recent letters sent to caravan owners who had objected to rises in site fees, and enquired whether a proportion of caravan site rents was allocated to the Council's Repairs and Renewals Fund. She was informed by the Town Clerk that the balances were obtained from all of the Council's trading activities, and these funds were allocated to expenditure where necessary, in accordance with the Council's Estimates.

She then enquired whether the post of General Manager at the Holiday Park had been filled, and if so, whether the appointment had been made on a temporary or permanent basis. The Town Clerk replied that, due to current circumstances, the post (as advertised) was no longer available, but an appointment had been made on a permanent basis on revised terms and conditions.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the Meeting were received from Councillors Bright and Hadley.

2. **STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL 2006/07**

The Clerk presented a revised Statement on Internal Control for the year 2006/07, and gave a brief summary of the amendments that had been incorporated within the document.

Following discussion, it was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-**

That the revised Statement on Internal Control for the year 2006/07 be formally adopted.

3. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT AND AUDIT LETTER – AUDIT 2005/06**

Consideration was given to the Annual Governance Report and 2005/06 Annual Audit Letter, and the need to formulate an Action Plan was highlighted by the Town Clerk.

Detailed consideration was given to the recommendations contained in Appendix 7 of the Report, and measures that had been taken to address the issues raised were noted.

In view of the action already taken, it was not now considered necessary to formulate a strategic Action Plan.

It was AGREED:-

That a letter be sent to the Audit Commission informing them of the actions taken by the Town Council in respect of the recommendations contained in Appendix 7 of the Annual Governance Report and Audit Letter 2005/06.

During the discussion, it was acknowledged that in terms of financial risk management, the risk factor increased with greater expenditure, particularly when supplies from one source exceeded £50,000, and the benefits of carrying out a “pareto” analysis was highlighted.

4. **ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES**

The Clerk updated Members on responses received from neighbouring authorities regarding the provision of accountancy services.

Negative responses had been received from Purbeck District Council, West Dorset District Council and Dorset County Council, due to lack of resources, but that he remained optimistic that a consultancy service could be provided by Poole Borough Council.

5. **CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR BURIAL FEES**

A letter was submitted from James Smith (Funeral Directors) requesting that no extra charge be levied for interments during the period between Christmas Eve and New Years Day.

Following a brief discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Gloyn-Cox, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Patrick, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the matter be deferred for consideration at the next meeting of the General Operations Committee to be held on 16th April 2008.

6. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Pratt, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That, as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the following matters.

Mr. Henry Lovegrove (Internal Auditor) joined the Meeting at 10.25 a.m.

7. **INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07**

Mr. Henry Lovegrove presented the Internal Audit Annual Report 2006/07 and was pleased to report that the overall system of internal control appears to be adequate.

The Audit Report recognised that the setting up of the Finance and Performance Working Group in 2006/07 had significantly improved the system of internal control, and the setting of clear responsibilities and target dates for

implementing recommendations had strengthened the corporate governance of the Council. No significant control weaknesses for inclusion in the Statement on Internal Control had been identified, although careful monitoring of some issues at the Holiday Park was recommended.

8. **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS**

Mr. Henry Lovegrove presented the interim internal audit reports. He provided background information and explanations regarding the recommendations and conclusions in respect of the following:-

- a) Sundry Debtors.
- b) Orders.
- c) Urgent Payments
- d) Payroll.
- e) Allotment Income.
- f) Bay View Holiday Park – Site Fees.
- g) Bay View Holiday Park - Recharges.

The Reports were noted and Mr. Lovegrove left the Meeting at 11.10 a.m.

9. **LEGAL ISSUES**

a) **Legal Challenge – Audit Commission**

Further to Minute No. 158 of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 3rd March 2008, the Clerk submitted a draft letter for submission to the District Auditor.

Following a brief discussion, it was RESOLVED:-

That the draft letter, subject to amendment, be approved.

b) **Land south of Caravan Park**

Further to Minute No. 141 of the Council Meeting held on 1st February 2008 consideration was given to a Briefing Note detailing various options for the future management of land south of the Caravan Park.

The benefits of transferring the management of the land to Dorset County Council as part of Durlston Country Park were highlighted, and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:-

That the Town Council enters into formal discussions with Dorset County Council for the future management of the land south of the Caravan Park.
