

HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held in the Council Chamber, Public Hall, Lee Lane, Horwich on Monday 12 December 2016 commencing at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors: C. Root (in the Chair), M. Brady, J. Bullock, S. Chadwick , R. Graham, P. Holmes, M. Jarvis, J. Kellett, K. McKeon, K. Schofield, P. Wright
Assistant Town Clerk: C. Morris
Nick Roberts, Head of Services and Commercial Development for Transport for Greater Manchester
1 member of the public

CHAIR TO OUTLINE FIRE SAFETY EVACUATION PROCEDURE:

FG 6580 Councillor Root outlined the procedure from the information provided.

TO SUBMIT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ACCEPT THE REASONS:

FG 6581 Resolved to accept apologies from Councillor Atkinson, Denton and Rock as presented.

TO WELCOME MR SAM TYSOE FROM TfGM AND TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON CHANGES TO BUS SERVICES IN HORWICH:

FG 6582 Nick Roberts, Head of Services and Commercial Development for Transport for Greater Manchester was present on behalf of Sam Tysoe who was unable to attend.

Mr Roberts gave Members a background on what it is the team did and the potential outcome or the long term impact of the decisions they make.

The Operational Service Planning team is responsible for the provision of bus services that are not met by the commercial market. Approximately 80% of the network is commercial which means it is the operator that determines the route, frequency of service and fares and is operated for profit. TfGM has no legislation over the commercial operators so if a commercial operator decides to deregister a service, TfGM has to consider if a replacement for all or part of the route can be justified. Any service contracted by TfGM has to go through a process of competitive tender.

As a result of efficiency savings, £7.1 million has been removed from the budget over a period of 3 years which has resulted in TfGM sending these services to the Competitive Tendering panel for commercial companies to bid.

There is a 56 day notice period to terminate services which is a tight time scale to factor in calculating statistic use, procurement and costs on whether the service is feasible or not.

The 577 contract has been awarded to UK Coachways up to October 2017 and from 4 February 2017 they will also operate the revised Saturday 518 service. It is important that every effort is made to maintain patronage to make the service sustainable.

Mr Roberts responded to Members' questions. It was confirmed that the 517 bus service would be withdrawn by February 2017. The 518 bus service from Brazley would have changes made to the timetable.

Members expressed their thanks on behalf of the community to both Sam Tysoe for his help and to Nick Roberts for attending the meeting on his behalf.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2016:

FG 6583 Following a question from Councillor Brady, a request for clarification to Minute ref. FG 6575 was made as follows: Councillor Brady requested that it was noted that the series of Freedom of Information requests received by Horwich Town Council made by individuals who may have previously represented Horwich First did not on this occasion and so, for the record, these were not Freedom of Information requests by individuals who were associated with Horwich First.

Resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2016 with 10 votes to 0 with 1 abstention.

TO REMIND MEMBERS TO MAKE A DECISION CONCERNING ANY MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE MEETING OF WHICH THEY HAVE AN INTEREST:

FG 6584 None.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PRESENT MAY PUT QUESTIONS OR MAKE OBSERVATIONS REGARDING MATTERS IN RELATION TO WHICH THE COUNCIL HAS POWERS OR DUTIES OR WHICH AFFECT THE PARISH. MAXIMUM PERIOD 15 MINUTES:

FG 6585 Resolved to move out of Committee to allow a member of the public wishing to speak.

A member of the public present raised a number of issues requiring a response from Council.

Resolved to return to Committee to allow the Chair to respond to the questions raised by the member of the public.

It was confirmed by the Chair that under Town Council's standing orders it was not possible for Members of the Council to respond to an invitation from a member of the public to comment on matters over which the Council does not have either powers or duties or a matter that does not affect the Parish.

The member of public had previously sent emails to formally request this matter be included as an agenda item for the next Town Council meeting. Members were reminded that members of the public may lobby Councillors with requests for items to be put on Council agendas and all requests for agenda items should be directed to the Chair of the relevant Committee who will then consult with the Town Clerk on the appropriateness and timing of these matters.

It was noted that at a previous meeting a Councillor proposed that this matter be put on an agenda and this was seconded by another Councillor. It was not possible to vote on this proposal as it did not appear on the agenda and it was not a matter that the Council had either powers or duties and not a matter that affected the Parish.

The member of the public had asked to circulate copies of his email exchange with the Town Clerk to all Members present. The Chair viewed the email and asked that the Assistant Town Clerk circulate it to Members. The Chair reminded Members that as an employer the Town Council had a duty of care to protect members of staff from harassment and bullying and that it had a staff social media policy which dealt with this matter. In response to a query it was confirmed that a copy of this policy would be sent to all Members at the earliest opportunity.

TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE HORWICH COMMUNITY CENTRE SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2016:

FG 6586 Resolved to approve the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Horwich Community Centre Sub Committee held on 2 December 2016.

TO APPROVE THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2017-2018:

FG 6587 The budget had been prepared on the basis that members did not wish to see either an increase or decrease in the precept figure from last year of £185,836. The precept had been kept at this amount to enable the Town Council to continue to provide many add on services to the local community including the support of Horwich Community Centre and Horwich Heritage Centre along with providing considerable financial assistance to many local voluntary and community groups.

Members had received a summary report with explanations for increase or decrease to accompany the draft budget proposals. It was noted that there was no requirement to delegate expenditure under the cleaning and caretaking costs heading, as since the start of the current financial year caretaking staff had been employed directly by the Council, as reflected by the increase in the salaries and wages heading.

It was also noted that it would be necessary to increase the training budget to enable both Town Council and Community Centre employees to undertake SAGE accounting package training following changes to financial management and audit requirements. Members were also reminded of 2017 being the year for awards of two civic medals, requiring an increase under the heading of civic recognition compared to the previous year.

Resolved to approve the draft budget proposals for 2017 – 2018 which would then be brought back to Town Council on 19 January 2017 as a finalised budget for formal approval.

TO NOMINATE AN ADDITIONAL MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON THE RIVINGTON AND BLACKROD GRAMMER SCHOOL FOUNDATION:

FG 6588 Resolved unanimously to nominate Councillor Jim Bullock as additional member of the Council to represent the Council on the Rivington and Blackrod Grammar School Foundation.

TO APPROVE COSTS OF GRITTING OF ADDITIONAL ROADS IN HORWICH, TO INCLUDE BROWNLOW ROAD AND NEW CHAPEL LANE BY BOLTON COUNCIL:

FG 6589 Members discussed the estimated costs of £1,000 per week of gritting additional roads in Horwich, to include Brownlow Road and New Chapel Lane until end of February 2017. It was confirmed that there was sufficient funding available in the environmental improvements budget for the current financial years which had not as yet been identified for any other purpose.

Resolved to approve the costs of gritting additional roads by Bolton Council in Horwich, which were Brownlow Road and New Chapel Lane, until end February 2017 up to a maximum budget of £12,000.

TO RECEIVE THE RESPONSE FROM JIM BATTLE, GREATER MANCHESTER POLICE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER REGARDING CONCERNS RAISED BY HORWICH TOWN COUNCIL REGARDING THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE PUBLIC ACCESS POINT AT HORWICH POLICE STATION:

FG 6590 Members had received copies of correspondence from the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester in response to the letter sent by the Town Clerk to the Chief Police and Crime Commissioner on 26 October 2016 regarding the Town Council's concerns regarding the proposed closure of the public access point at Middlebrook police station. It had been

confirmed that the access point was due to close in February 2017 and several suggestions were made by Members in response to this information.

Resolved firstly to investigate what police services were still available and to publicise these where possible e.g. Council newsletter in order to assist in reassuring the public and secondly to invite a representative from GMP to attend Council to discuss arrangements for continuing and future police presence in Horwich.

ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT – SCHEDULE ATTACHED:

FG 6591 Resolved to approve the accounts for payment as presented and amounting to £ 7,518.98.

TOWN CLERKS REPORT – FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

FG 6592

- a. Bolton Vision Partnership: invitation to Bolton Vision Conference on 31 January 2017.
- b. Horwich Heritage: invitation to event on 13 December at 7.30pm at Horwich Community Centre ‘Young Once’.
- c. ISS Landscaping: acknowledgement of email from Town Clerk on behalf of council expressing thanks for continued maintenance of flower beds around the Loco Works War.

Resolved to note the Town Clerk’s Report as presented.

REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES:

FG 6593 Neighbourhood Plan
Councillor M. Brady informed Members that she had attended the Neighbourhood Plan meeting held on 28th November 2016 and also present were Councillor Bullock, Councillor Rock and 9 residents. The meeting explained the time and costs involved with producing a Neighbourhood Plan. It was advised that the Neighbourhood Plan committee would be responsible for identifying funding available from central government. An outline of roles required in order to establish a Neighbourhood Plan committee was presented before the meeting concluded with residents considering the information they had received and an invitation to attend the next meeting, date to be confirmed.

A request for copies of the power point presentation shown at the Neighbourhood Plan meeting to be circulated to all Members of the Town Council was duly noted.

Rivington Chase Liaison Group

Copies of the minutes of the meeting of the Rivington Chase Liaison Group had been circulated to all Members for information.

IN VIEW OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS ABOUT TO BE TRANSACTED IT IS ADVISABLE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE TEMPORARILY EXCUSED AND IF PRESENT ARE ASKED TO WITHDRAW.