

Main points arising: Annual Town Council Meeting record/ Mayor's engagements/ Civic Hall-Library integration project/ First World War commemoration events/ Poynton Neighbourhood Plan/ Request for Single Member wards for Cheshire East/ Minutes of Standing Committees

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 23RD JUNE 2014 AT THE CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr Ms R Horsman

Cllrs. M Beanland, L A Clarke, C Gorst, Mrs S Horsman, P Hoyland, G King, H Murray, Mrs J Sewart, G Smith and R West

14. Questions to the Mayor

There were no questions to the Mayor.

15. Apologies for absence

Cllrs. G Bartos, I Hollingworth, B Lewis, Mrs J Saunders, M C G Sewart, A Smith and Mrs I Thornton-Maddocks

16. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Interests

Cllr Hoyland asked for advice regarding agenda item 23, and whether those CE Councillors present should be declaring an interest. Cllr West said this item was being received for information only and therefore the issue does not arise.

17. Minutes of the Annual Town Council Meeting held on 12th May 2014

Cllr Murray noted that there were a number of serious inaccuracies in the (previous) Mayor's speech, and asked for advice on how to address this issue. Cllr West stated that this item was merely to approve the minutes, and agree that they provided an accurate record of what was said at the previous meeting. Cllr Murray agreed that the minutes provided an accurate account, but wanted to challenge a number of assertions made in the Mayor's speech, perhaps by means of an agenda item at a future Town Council meeting.

The Clerk advised that Cllr Murray's concerns will be noted in this meeting record, and it would be for Members to decide collectively if at a future Town

Council meeting they wished to introduce an agenda item in order to deal with the issue raised.

RESOLVED: That an item to challenge some of the assertions made in the previous Mayor's speech is included in a future Town Council meeting (10 - 1 against)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Annual Town Council Meeting held on 12th May 2014 are approved as an accurate record and signed by the Mayor (NC)

18. Mayor's announcements

The Mayor read out some highlights from her Mayoral engagements since assuming office, a full record of which is available from the Town Clerk.

19. Civic Hall/Library Integration Project

Cllr A Smith was unable to attend the meeting this evening, for which he had offered his apologies. The Clerk provided a brief summary of the written update. As a footnote regarding asbestos, Cllr Bartos had asked whether the Town Council was compliant with current legislation with regard to an asbestos survey and asbestos management plan. Since bringing this matter to the Clerk's attention the Deputy Clerk has invited quotations from two specialists in this field and the outcome is awaited. Following contract award the Town Council should be fully compliant.

RESOLVED: That the written and verbal update on the Civic Hall/Library integration and Civic Hall roof project is received (NC)

20. First World War Commemoration Events

Members were provided with a written update from the Clerk on First World War Commemoration events in Poynton. The Clerk highlighted key events.

RESOLVED: That the written update from the Clerk on First World War Commemoration events is received (NC)

21. Poynton Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Hoyland provided a verbal update on the Poynton Neighbourhood Plan. He apologised for the verbal report, and explained that this was because of recent developments, and other information that had only become available directly before this meeting.

Cllr Hoyland explained that the Cheshire East Local Plan is following its due process. Some weeks ago it became apparent that Adlington were submitting their Neighbourhood Plan area for designation. About 200 hectares had been excluded by Cheshire East, and as a consequence Cllrs Hoyland and West have had some lengthy discussions with Planning Officers at CE and with representatives in Adlington and the Poynton Working Group. Following a meeting earlier today with Adrian Fisher, Head of Planning at CE, there is now a proposal with which Adlington Parish Council, the Poynton Working Group and Adrian Fisher are content. In the interim period the Leader of CE Council has decided to put the political weight of the Council behind Neighbourhood Planning, representing a change of direction. As a consequence there are more resources available. All Town and Parish Councils have been asked whether they wish to express an interest in Neighbourhood Planning. Cllr Hoyland understands that about twenty Town and Parish Councils have done so to date and there is a meeting later this week to find out how to take this forward. The Town Council had already agreed to a Neighbourhood Plan for Poynton, and the Clerk has made this known to CE on the Town Council's behalf.

Following developments of the Poynton Neighbourhood Plan and the flyers circulated to the community via the Poynton Post to raise interest and awareness, Cllr Hoyland was pleased to report that about 50 expressions of interest had been received from residents. A meeting comprising a presentation followed by questions and answers was held a few weeks ago, and about 30 to 35 people attended a very lively two hour session. Most pleasingly, of those present the majority wished to assist with the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. A follow on session has been organised for Saturday morning 19th July 2014.

CE will decide on Site Allocations for those towns and parishes who did not want to get involved with Neighbourhood Planning. For those who do, CE will not decide on Site Allocations for them but refer to the Neighbourhood Plan itself. Cllr Hoyland said that based on the outline plans Adrian Fisher does not see any need to exclude any land from either the Adlington or Poynton Neighbourhood Plans. This is good news because it means that everyone from the community can genuinely be involved in the process and benefit from the Plan. This is however dependent on both Councils providing a form of words that satisfy CE and express fundamental support for what is in the current Local Plan in terms of strategy. Cllr Hoyland proposed that the relevant wording is drafted by the Clerk, and Cllrs Clarke and Hoyland, with final approval delegated to the Planning Committee. Both Adlington and Poynton's proposals need to be submitted to CE at the same time.

RESOLVED: That relevant wording is drafted by the Clerk, Cllrs Clarke and Hoyland, with the final authority delegated to the Planning Committee, and that the verbal update by Cllr Hoyland is received (NC)

22. Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles for Council Funded Services

RESOLVED: That the Cheshire East Council brief concerning Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles for Council Funded Services is received and noted (NC)

23. Request for a reduction in the number of Cheshire East Councillors by introducing single member wards

Members received and considered a letter received from Mr G F Waller suggesting a reduction in the number of Cheshire East Councillors by introducing single member wards.

Cllr West suggested that the letter is simply received. Cllr Murray felt that the letter should be considered and its implications challenged. Cllr Mrs Sewart agreed that some debate and consideration is required with a reply sent to Mr Waller's letter. Cllr Hoyland endorsed Cllr Murray's comments and pointed out that there is no evidence to substantiate the claims in his letter.

Cllr Mrs Sewart proposed that the letter is received respectfully and with thanks, but that the reply should state that after debate and consideration of the facts, Members do not feel at this time able to support the views and comments in the letter.

Cllr Clarke noted that since the local government reorganisation in 2008/09 there has in any case been a substantial reduction in the number of Councillors and the current system should be allowed to bed in for longer. In terms of reducing costs, officers higher up in the local authority's hierarchy are paid much more than Councillors, and that is where savings can be made. Cllrs Hoyland and Gorst endorsed Cllr Clarke's comments.

Cllr Murray referred to the penultimate paragraph of the letter, and noted that two wards into one increases the workload substantially, given the increase in the population for that area. This could be done but would require far more streamlining than that undertaken by CE at present and if that streamlining occurs, the importance of what CE does particularly for cared for children and adults increases. Some of these areas involve full time highly qualified work.

RESOLVED: That the letter is received respectfully and with thanks, and that the Clerk replies, stating that after debate and consideration of the facts, Members do not at this time feel able to support the views and comments in the letter (NC)

24. Minutes of Standing Committees

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment meeting held on 7th April 2014 be received and adopted (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Facilities, Infrastructure and Economic Development meeting held on 7th April 2014 be received and adopted (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Extraordinary Planning and Environment meeting held on 22nd April 2014 be received and adopted (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes meeting held on 28th April 2014 be received and adopted (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of Community, Order and Public Safety meeting held on 28th April 2014 be received and adopted (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning and Environment meeting held on 12th May 2014 be received and adopted (NC)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Extraordinary Planning and Environment meeting held on 19th May 2014 be received and adopted (NC)

Cllr Clarke explained the reason for the number of Planning and Environment Committee records. This is because CE has moved to a practice of only giving three weeks as a period for consultation of planning applications. This used to be six weeks in the past, and the Town Council Planning Committee operates on a six week cycle. Cllr Clarke raised his concern about how the Committee can best meet the demand. Cllr Clarke suggested that the Clerk raise this at a meeting with the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) to find out how other Councils deal with this.

Following discussion Cllr Murray suggested that this issue is addressed as an agenda item on a Planning Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: That the issue of the three week consultation period for planning applications is an agenda item at the next Planning and Environment Committee meeting (NC)

The meeting concluded at 8.50 pm