

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE MEETING OF THE
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE CANVEY ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT THE PADDOCKS, LONG ROAD, CANVEY ISLAND ON
MONDAY 15TH DECEMBER 2008 AT 7.30PM**

PRESENT:

Councillors: P. Davies (Chairman) D. Blackwell B. Dixie N. Narvey
R. Howard(from 7.35pm) J. Liddiard

Non- Committee Members: D. Anderson

Also present: One member of the public
Mrs J. Abel – Town Clerk
Mrs E. De Can – Assistant to the Clerk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllr. R. Bishop who was unwell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

3. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no representations received from members of the public present.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 13TH OCTOBER 2008

Item 5. 7. Bank Mandate

Councillors noted that the amended bank mandate, authorising all members of the committee to act as signatories on both of the Council's accounts, had been sent to the Council's bankers.

Item 8. Chairman's Chain of Office

Members noted that this had now been received.

Cllr. R. Howard joined the meeting at 7.35pm.

5. STAFFING REPORT

Councillors noted the Clerk's report of the current staffing structure. The Clerk reported that the 1.6 staff (equivalent) which the Council employed had become insufficient to carry out the current functions of the Council adequately and that this situation was likely to be compounded in the near future as the Council took on more responsibilities and had more assets to manage.

6. RECRUITMENT- EVENTS AND PUBLICITY OFFICER

The committee considered a proposal prepared by the Clerk that a full-time Events and Publicity officer be employed to carry out the function of organizing the many events planned for 2009, prepare newsletters, press releases and website updates to promote Council activities and events and assist with staffing the opening of the Council offices for an additional two days per week.

Members discussed this at length and suggested a number of alternatives to the Clerk's proposal including the appointment of two part time staff to include an Events and Publicity officer and an administrator. The Clerk pointed out that the Council office had very limited space and that the

appointment of one full-time post would make best use of this. Some members felt that the space could be used adequately through a 'hot-desking' arrangement.

Members were advised that Rayleigh, South Woodham Ferrers and Springfield Councils opened their Council offices daily to the public. Some councillors felt that any individual employed to carry out this role should not be expected to assist with the public's enquiries. The Clerk suggested that all members of the Council's very small team were required to be flexible in carrying out their duties and that contact with the Canvey community would be beneficial to the post holder.

The Clerk advised that there were currently insufficient staffing hours to regularly prepare newsletters and update the website and that this would prevent the Council from achieving Quality Status accreditation in the future. Councillors noted that 47 Essex councils now held this accreditation and that Canvey Island would not currently be eligible.

The Clerk confirmed that it would not be necessary to raise the precept rate in 2009 -10 to meet the additional staff salary cost.

Cllr. B. Dixie proposed that a new post is created for an Events and Publicity officer for 24 hours per week to include staffing the Council office for an additional two sessions per week. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. N. Harvey. The committee voted on the proposal. The motion was not carried.

An amendment was proposed by Cllr. R. Howard that a new post is created for a full-time Events and Publicity officer to include staffing the Council office for an additional two sessions per week. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. J. Liddiard. The committee voted on the proposal. The motion was carried. Cllrs. Blackwell, Dixie and Harvey voted against the proposal and requested that their names were recorded.

RECOMMEND that the Council appoints a full-time Events and Publicity officer to carry out the following:

- Events Organization and related meetings (21 hours/week)
- Regular newsletters, website updates, press releases and events promotion (5 hours/week)
- Production of an annual community directory (3 hours/week)
- Assisting with staffing of the Council office to enable it to open daily to the public (8 hours)

7. BUDGET 2009-2010

The Clerk reported that the draft budget had been prepared in greater detail than the Council had previously seen to meet statutory requirements.

The Committee noted the following:

- The Council's cash in hand sum of £348,663 at 30th November 2008;
- The projected annual expenditure in 2008-09 of £179,079 and projected cash in hand sum of £287,631 at 31st March 2009;
- The draft budget expenditure for 2009-2010 of £335,800;
- The proposal that the precept for 2009-2010 is set at £266,738 representing a 0% increase to the Canvey community and that net expenditure of £69,062 is met from the Council's balances;
- The projected cash in hand sum at 31st March 2010 of £218,569.

RECOMMEND that the Council raises a precept of £266,738 in the 2009-2010 financial year.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

CHAIRMAN