

SWANLEY TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee
Held at the Civic Centre, Swanley on Wednesday 16 September 2015**

Present

Cllr V Southern (Chairman)	Cllr L Dyball
Cllr J Barnes	Cllr R Morris
Cllr L Ball	Cllr E Komolafe
Cllr R Brookbank (substitute for Cllr T Searles)	

Also in attendance**Councillors****Officers**

Cllr H Willingale	Julie Pilbeam (Chief Executive)
	Lisa Saunders (Operations Director)
	Geoff Mills (Democratic Services Officer)
	Nabih Fonkwe (Finance Officer)

The meeting commenced 7.50 PM

Before the commencement of business The Chief Executive introduced Nabih Fonkwe who had recently been appointed as the Council's Finance Officer.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence from Cllr T Searles were received and approved. In accordance with the Council's Standing Orders Cllr R Brookbank attended the meeting as a substitute for Cllr Searles

Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

Minutes

9843 It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2015 be agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

Financial Matters

- (a) 2015 Monthly Payments to 31 July 2015
- (b) Bank – Cash and Investment Reconciliation to 31 July 2015
- (c) Budget to 31 July 2015

During the course of discussion the Chief Executive reported that figures which had been received since the publication of the committee report showed that overall Swanley Banqueting was now operating in profit year to date. However the Olympic was still operating a loss. The Finance Officer reported the actions she would be implementing in order to put future reports into a clearer format. The Chief Executive said the aim was for future reports to contain clearer and more concise information which would enable members to take decisions in the light of the most up to date financial information.

9844 It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The monthly payments to 31 July 2015 be noted;
- (b) The Reconciliation Statement as at 31 July 2015 be approved and signed by Cllr Southern and the Chief Executive on behalf of the Council.
- (c) The Budget to 31 July 2015 be noted

Appointment of New Finance Officer

Cllr Southern said that since her appointment as the Council's Finance Officer Nabih Fonkwe had already identified some areas of potential improvement in the day to management of the Council's finances. The Chief Executive said that in future members could expect to see an improvement in the way financial information was presented to the Committee and that she was looking to appoint an independent IT consultant to undertake a review of the Council's financial systems and to advise on the introduction of an appropriate new system as soon as possible. Cllr Morris said and it was agreed that the Chief Executive should move to implement the recommendations of the IT consultant at the earliest opportunity

Cllr Willingale then moved and all agreed to place on record the Committee's welcome to Nabih Fonkwe as the Town Council's new Finance Officer.

9845 It was **RESOLVED** that

- (a) That an independent consultant be appointed to undertake a review of the Council's IT financial systems and that the Chief Executive be authorised to move on the implementation of the consultant's recommendations at the earliest opportunity.
- (b) That the Committee place on record its welcome to Nabih Fonkwe as the Town Council's new Finance Officer.

Boilers Update (supplementary report)

This report advised the Committee on progress with the independent survey being undertaken of the heating systems at each of the Council's sites. The quotes received for the work were far less than the original quote of £60,000 to replace all the boiler systems. Following negotiation the combined quote to bring the boiler system at the Civic Centre and Alexandra Suite up to standard was £11,500. That work had now commenced and should be completed during early October.

Further investigation is taking place into the Olympic quotes in order to ensure best value for money.

9846 It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee note the success of the Council to save a great deal of money through instructing appropriate independent specialists and also through undertaking tight financial processes and strict negotiations.

Swanley Banqueting Venues

(This is an unrestricted minute of a matter which was dealt with as confidential under the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960)

This report provided the Committee with an assessment of the financial sustainability of the banqueting venues and put forward recommendations for reducing their costs to the Council.

9847 Following detailed consideration the Committee **RESOLVED** as follows:

- (a) Full Council be asked to consider the closure of the Woodlands as of January 2016 with officers being asked to move all future bookings from the Woodlands to the Alexandra Suite and/or Olympic.
- (b) Subject to the approval of recommendation 1 above The Town Council delegate to the Chief Executive the authority to manage all consequential staffing issues arising from this decision.
- (c) Prior to The Woodlands being marketed a Town Planning consultant be appointed to work on the Council's behalf on the submission of an outline planning application for residential development.
- (d) The Town Council authorise a budget of £ 2,500 to secure the Woodlands and arrange for security to keep the building secure during its closure.
- (e) The Chief Executive be authorised to appoint the consultant Town Planner referred to in recommendation 3 and that a sum of up to £10,000 be approved to cover the costs of the consultant and the planning fees.

The meeting closed at 9.00 PM

SignedCHAIRMAN

Date: 14 October 2015