

Minutes of the meeting held at Yoredale, Bainbridge on Friday, 8 February 2008.

Present:

R Alderson, J Blackie, Mrs A Brooks (in the Chair), SHK Butcher, G Dalton, C Hammond, TRN Harrison-Topham, Mrs D Millward and W Weston.

Also in attendance: KJ Lancaster.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for five minutes in order to allow members time to read correspondence circulated at the meeting that had been received from Home Group Housing Association, 12 individuals and the Secretary of Grassington and District Old People's Welfare.

1/08 PUBLIC MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the public minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2007, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

2/08 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Secretariat Officer reported that a Staff representative intended to make a statement to the Committee on Agenda Item No 17. The Chairman stated that the Statement would be taken immediately prior to the Committee's consideration of that item.

3/08 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED -

That pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of those items of business listed in column 1 of the following table on the grounds that each involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 specified in column 2:

<u>Item No</u>	<u>Paragraph Number</u>
15	3
16	3
17	4

4/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from RA Bird and C Lis.

5/08 DECLARATIONS OF LOBBYING

SHK Butcher reported that he had been lobbied on Agenda Item No 6 Wood Lane Car Park, Grassington.

6/08 WOOD LANE CAR PARK, GRASSINGTON

CONSIDERED – the report of the Project and Estates Officer, together with additional correspondence, circulated at the meeting, from Home Group Housing Association, 12 individuals and the Secretary of Grassington and District Old People's Welfare.

The Chief Executive reported that Home Group Housing Association had carried out a feasibility study of the site and had indicated that it would be likely to submit a planning application for two affordable dwellings. He stated that the matter raised a number of issues, both locally within Grassington and for the Authority and the Committee in respect of the Authority's policy on local and affordable housing. He reminded members that the Authority had power to apply Authority policy, but could not ignore it.

He suggested that, in the light of the new information, the Committee could either:

- (a) confirm that the Authority has no further use for the site;
- (b) contact the parish council in respect of the interest from the Housing Association; and
- (c) bring the conclusions to a future meeting of the full Authority;

or discuss and determine the matter.

Some reference was made by members to the original gift of the land and the belief locally that the legal position precluded any housing development on the site. A number of issues were raised by members in support of the retention of the car park, including:

- it being suggested that while the Authority was keen to attract tourists to the Park, the site provided a valuable car park for local visitors to Grassington, particularly those elderly and less able, who would find it impossible to walk from the car park at Colvend to the shops in Grassington;
- the need for further housing in the area being questioned, as properties in Gars End Lane were unoccupied;
- the possible detrimental impact on the viability of shops in Grassington if the car park was closed;
- reference to a petition, which a member had brought to the meeting, in support of the retention of the car park that had attracted significant local support in a short period of time.

The Chief Executive suggested that the matter would benefit from further debate by the Authority if the accuracy of housing needs surveys was being questioned, as highlighted by the reference to unoccupied dwellings, as the surveys had been crucial in establishing the Authority's current housing policies.

A member suggested that, because of the importance of this issue to residents of Grassington, any further debate should be at a special meeting of the Authority in Grassington itself. The Chief Executive reminded members that at its meeting in January, the Authority had agreed to hold its

two-monthly Authority meetings in Bainbridge. He highlighted that whilst a special meeting of the Authority would not necessitate the suspension of the Authority's Standing Orders to reconsider that January decision, the matter would, ordinarily, be considered at an ordinary meeting of the Authority.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report and further comments be noted;
- (b) it be confirmed that the Authority has no further use for the site;
- (c) the parish council be contacted in respect of the interest from the Housing Association; and
- (d) a further report be made to the March meeting of the Authority to include advice on the legal position in respect of the land and of any restrictions on its future use, and any further comments including from the parish council, to enable members to decide on the need for further consideration of the matter and the process for that consideration.

7/08 FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT: NINE MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2007

*[Note: The following declarations of interest were made in the item by members:
TRN Harrison Topham – a personal prejudicial interest as a potential recipient of a Haytime grant; and
Mrs D Millward, a personal interest, as Chairman of the Haytime project.]*

CONSIDERED – the report of the Senior Finance Officer.

RESOLVED -

That:

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) the request to carry forward the allocations identified in the table in paragraph 7 of the Senior Finance Officer report be approved; and
- (c) the increase to the hourly rate charged for legal work on Section 106 Agreements, from £35 an hour to £40 an hour (paragraph 15 of the report) be approved.

8/08 PENSION FUND CONTRIBUTION RATES

[Note: TRN Harrison Topham declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the item as a member of North Yorkshire County Council's Pension Fund Committee.]

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Finance.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report be noted;

(b) the current deficit recovery period of 15 years (with 12 years remaining) be retained and therefore a higher employer's contribution rate of 21.8% be agreed; and

(c) that the cost of this higher contribution be excluded from calculating the '70% cap' in relation to the proportion of Defra grant that is taken up by salary costs.

9/08 EXTERNAL FUNDING TARGETS

CONSIDERED – the report of the Senior Finance Officer.

RESOLVED –

That:

(a) the additional funding targets as calculated (paragraph 10 of the Senior Finance Officer's report) be approved;

(b) the targets for external funding secured in partnership with YDMT and other bodies set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved; and

(c) it be agreed that the Quarterly Financial Progress Report be adapted to monitor progress against both the "internal" targets on a quarterly basis and against the partnership targets at the 6 month and outturn stages.

10/08 COACH PARKING IN AUTHORITY CAR PARKS

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Park Management.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted and no charges be made for coaches using Authority car parks.

11/08 YORKSHIRE DALES APPRENTICESHIP SCHEME

CONSIDERED – the report of the Ranger Services Manager.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

12/08 STAFFING MATTERS

CONSIDERED – the report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

13/08 SICKNESS ABSENCE

CONSIDERED – the report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

14/08 FIXED TERM CONTRACTS

CONSIDERED – the report of the Senior Administrative Officer.

RESOLVED –

That the Fixed Term Contract Policy and Procedure be approved.

The remainder of business was considered in private

15/08 REVIEW OF TRAVEL EXPENSES CLAIMED BY OFFICERS

A Unison staff representative addressed the meeting and reported the concerns of his members at the proposals. Their proposals were seen as:

- *being unnecessary in view of the Authority's better than expected grant settlement;*
- *being unfair in that they would, in effect, result in a pay cut for staff in comparison to the terms on which they had taken employment with the Authority;*
- *having particular impact on the Ranger Service in terms of home to work travel; and*
- *having a potentially negative effect on recruitment as an Essential User Allowance was viewed as being a key factor in attracting new staff.*

CONSIDERED – the report of the Head of Finance and Resources on the continuing appropriateness of travel expenses currently paid to officers in relation to business travel and that set out the recommendations of a Working Group of Members and officers that had been established to look at this area of the Authority's expenditure.

The Head of Finance and Resources informed members that there were three key areas for consideration:

- the issue of Home to Work travel for the Ranger Service
- whether a uniform mileage rate should be applied; and
- the removal of Essential User allowances

and, subject to members' decisions, whether staff should receive 'protection'.

A member expressed some concern at the proposals as he had until recently assumed that vehicles were provided for staff by the Authority.

A member of the Working Group stated that this was an issue that needed to be addressed and had been elsewhere. He accepted that an essential user allowance was seen as a recruitment tool, but suggested that it was a situation that would be made clear to new job applicants.

RESOLVED –

That, with effect from 1 April 2008, the following changes be made to the arrangements for the payment of staff travel expenses:

- (a) Apply a charge rate of 20p/mile to Rangers for private mileage in Authority vehicles;
- (b) Abolish the Essential User Allowance;
- (c) Apply a uniform mileage rate of 40p a mile; and
- (d) Protection of existing arrangement be applied for a period of five years.

16/08 PENNINE BRIDLEWAY NATIONAL TRAIL – NEW BRIDLEWAY BRIDGE, FAR MOOR

[Note: W Weston declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as a member of the Forestry Commission for England and left the meeting during the consideration and determination of the matter.

TRN Harrison-Topham declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the item as a member of North Yorkshire County Council.]

Members were assured that independent advice would be sought on the design and proposed construction methods and that the bridge would be 'horse friendly'.

CONSIDERED – the report of the Pennine Bridleway Project Officer.

RESOLVED –

That approval be given to a single tender being sought from Forestry Civil Engineering to design and project manage the construction of a new bridleway bridge at Far Moor Common, spanning the River Ribble.

17/08 REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM OPPORTUNITIES FUND

[Note: Mrs D Millward declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item as she was involved in the development of a similar project as part of the Raydale Project and left the meeting during the consideration and determination of the matter.]

CONSIDERED – the report of the Sustainable Development Officer.

RESOLVED –

That, as identified in the report of the Sustainable Development Officer, approval be given for the commissioning of a baseline feasibility study to identify potential sites within the Yorkshire Dales National Park for installing small-scale hydropower generation.