

At a meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held on Wednesday 1st February 2017 at the Civic Offices, Wellington Road Community Centre, Rhyl commencing at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor P. Prendergast (Chair)

Councillors Mrs J. Butterfield JP MBE, Mrs. J. Chamberlain-Jones, Mrs E. M. Chard, A. R. James, Mrs P. M. Jones, Ms J. McAlpine, B. Mellor, Miss S. L. Roberts, A. J. Rutherford, D. Simmons, W. N. Tasker, T. Thomas and Miss C. L. Williams.

Mr G. J. Nickels – Town Clerk
Miss H. J. Windus – Deputy Town Clerk

97. COUNCILLOR BRIAN MOYLAN

The Chair referred to the recent passing of Cefndy Ward Councillor Brian Moylan after a long and bravely fought battle with illness.

The meeting stood for a minute's silence, after which the Chair advised of Councillor Moylan's funeral arrangements.

98. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted from Councillors I. Armstrong (indisposed), B. Blakeley (indisposed), Mrs W. M. Mullen-James (indisposed) and S. H. Ratcliffe (indisposed).

99. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, on the grounds of confidentiality.

100. PROPOSED PROMENADE DEVELOPMENT

The Chair welcomed Denbighshire County Council's Leader, Councillor Hugh Evans, Corporate Director, Ms Rebecca Maxwell and Head of Facilities, Assets and Housing, Mr Jamie Groves to the meeting and invited them to address Members on the latest proposals for an aquatic centre on the Promenade.

Mr Groves advised that:

- Denbighshire County Council yesterday approved the waterpark proposal which allowed the pool at Rhyl Leisure Centre to remain and furthermore benefit from £0.5m worth of investment.
- The water park would not now feature a 25 metre swimming pool which although would reduce the overall size of building, would not change the look and feel of it.

- As a recent structural survey on the pool tank at the Leisure Centre revealed a 25 year lifespan, and to remove travelling time for current users, it made sense to keep the 'municipal' facilities at the Leisure Centre.
- In order to fix the capital costs to build the new waterpark they would need the Town Council's firm commitment of £2m within the next couple of days to avoid rising material costs which would push the overall build cost up significantly.
- Without the Town Council's firm commitment they were not in a position to finalise the business case of the entire project, which would mean they could not hit the required planning deadlines in time to have the facility up and open for Easter 2019.
- They appreciated that the speed of the proposals and the urgency for an answer to their request for a significant contribution from the Town Council was not ideal, but hoped that they had provided enough of an explanation as to why that was?
- Their application for a further £800k from Welsh Government was looking positive.
- The new waterpark offer would be unique to Wales.

Ms Maxwell added that the £15.4m investment was very much about the regeneration of Rhyl and to its overall economic development. The waterpark was expected to attract in the region of 350,000 additional visits to Rhyl each year and with the waterpark offering half day entertainment, it was envisaged that many of those visitors would leave the building and be tempted to spend on the High Street and beyond.

Councillor Evans advised that the proposal was both practical and sustainable having undergone numerous rigorous tests. He felt that to not proceed with it was a bigger long-term risk to Rhyl and Denbighshire than to proceed and urged the Town Council to offer its firm commitment over the next few days.

In response to Members' questions and comments, Councillor Evans, Ms Maxwell and Mr Groves said that:

- The removal of the pool at the Leisure Centre was initially to create space for improved fitness and changing facilities at a cost of £0.5m. Having looked into it further we found that it would be cheaper to leave the pool where it was and it would still be possible to make those improvements. An altogether better proposal.
- The entry fees as reported in today's edition of the Daily Post did not take into account the discount that would apply for Denbighshire Leisure Card holders making it £11 for an adult and £7 for a child for a half day stay. These prices are for all year round and set now two years in advance, which will be even more good value as most other facilities prices will have increased by then.
- More detailed documents, as presented to Denbighshire County Councillors yesterday, could be found on DCC's website and would give Town Councillors confidence in their contribution not going towards "another Children's Village".
- DCC officers had provided as much help to the Town Council as they possibly could and that they would share the new technical drawings of the project as soon as they had them.
- As DCC would be borrowing the £2m not the Town Council, the onus was on them to carry out the required level of public consultation, not the Town

Council, but the Town Council should of course share information with Rhyl residents as it saw fit.

It was suggested that the DCC officers leave the Council Chamber to give the Town Council the opportunity to come to their decision after which the officers would be invited to return to the Chamber to be told the outcome.

The DCC Member and officers duly left the Chamber.

Discussions then took place around the need for some assurances should the waterpark be transferred to a third party organisation further down the line, bearing in mind the difficulties experienced with the SunCentre; also about the Town Council's £2m being spent only on the project and not transferred elsewhere and finally on all future press releases being prepared jointly between DCC and the Town Council.

Members referred to a few negative comments on social media about the project but made the point that they had personally received many more positive views.

Members felt that having two Town Councillors join DCC's Project Board would also be beneficial for regular reports back to the Town Council.

RESOLVED that Members voted unanimously in favour of giving DCC a firm commitment of a contribution of £2m plus interest towards the waterpark subject to the following assurances and conditions:

- (i) That the Town Council's contribution to be put towards the construction of the waterpark and not transferred elsewhere.*
- (ii) That Councillors A. J. Rutherford and Miss S. L. Roberts be appointed to DCC's Project Board.*
- (iii) That should the waterpark's operation be transferred from DCC to a third party in years to come, the Town Council be part of that process.*
- (iv) That all future communications regarding the waterpark be prepared jointly between DCC and the Town Council, namely through Gunsmoke Communications.*
- (v) That Town Councillors will have a presence at all of DCC's future public engagement sessions, planning or otherwise.*

Councillor Evans, Ms Maxwell and Mr Groves were invited back into the Town Council Chamber and advised of the above, all of which was agreed to by the County representatives.

Ms Maxwell thanked the Town Council for its support and swift decision which now enabled them to submit all of the necessary documents to hit the deadlines.

The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance before they left the Chamber.

The Town Clerk then circulated two options he and the Finance Officer had worked out as possible ways to raise the £2m plus interest.

The Town Clerk advised that it made sense to reallocate some of the Council's earmarked reserves and any underspend from the 2016/17 to establish a one off lump payment to reduce interest on subsequent borrowing requirements. This would be followed by a review of all existing Town Council budgets and the

reallocation of any savings identified towards the Council's required annual contributions which would hopefully reduce the amount required to be raised by increases in the Council precept.

Once the level of funding required from the precept had been established the Council would then need to determine whether to either immediately increase the precept to raise the required shortfall in funding (option 1) or to alternatively stagger the increase over a number of years by utilising the Council's general reserves (Option 2). The Town Clerk advised that if option 2 was implemented then the Council would also need to agree and implement a financial plan to return the Council's General Reserves to the required level.

RESOLVED that the gradual phased increase in the Town Councils portion of Council Tax to raise the necessary funds to make the annual contributions to DCC was Members' preferred choice.

FURTHER RESOLVED that Standing Orders be suspended to enable the Town Clerk to respond as a matter of urgency.

101. OPEN SESSION

At the conclusion of the above item it was **RESOLVED** that the meeting resume in open session.

102. PAYMENTS AND RECEIPTS REPORT – DECEMBER 2016

With Members' agreement the Chair deferred the above item to the next meeting of Council.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred to February's meeting of Council.

103. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS TO 31st DECEMBER 2016 AND FORECASTS FOR THE 2016/17 FINANCIAL YEAR

With Members' agreement the Chair deferred the above item to the next meeting of Council.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred to February's meeting of Council.

104. INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT TO 31st DECEMBER 2016

With Members' agreement the Chair deferred the above item to the next meeting of Council.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred to February's meeting of Council.

**105. CONSULTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – B5118 WEST PARADE AND MARINE DRIVE RHYL
(1.)(PROHIBITION OF OVERNIGHT PARKING)(CARAVANS AND MOTOR CARAVANS) ORDER 201
(2.) NOTICE OF PROPOSED PAY AND DISPLAY ON STREET PARKING**

The Chair reported receipt of the above for Members' consideration (circulated with agenda).

RESOLVED that the Order be received.

106. CONSULTATION: DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO.17 PARC ESMOR

The Town Clerk reported receipt of the above (circulated with agenda) asking for the Town Council's view on plans to extinguish the above footpath which has been unusable for the past 40 years and is no longer needed.

The Town Clerk advised that the Ward Councillor had confirmed that the footpath did not exist.

RESOLVED that the Town Council is in agreement with the removal of the footpath.

107. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Town Clerk referred to the above (circulated with agenda) for Members' formal consideration.

RESOLVED that the report be referred to the Council's Risk Assessment Sub-Committee for its consideration and recommendations.

108. CORRESPONDENCE: NATURAL RESOURCES WALES – FLOOD WARDENS

With Members' agreement the Chair deferred the above item to the next meeting of Council.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred to February's meeting of Council.

109. MEMBERS' INFORMATION ITEMS

The Chair advised that there were no urgent matters to raise.

110. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act, 1960, on the grounds of confidentiality.

111. STANDING ITEM: POLICE CLOSURE ORDERS

Further to minute no.79 of the meeting held on 3rd February 2016, the Town Clerk advised that no applications had been received from North Wales Police.

112. CLOSURE OF MEETING

There being no further business the Chair closed the meeting.

Chair:

Date: