

Assets and Services Committee

**Held on Wednesday 9th February at 2.30pm
Day Centre, London Rd, Halesworth**

Minutes

Present: Councillors;
P Dutton, A Fleming (Chair), R Lewis, J Mosely, D Wollweber.

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk)

1. **Apologies:** Cllr M Took, Cllr J Hewett
2. **To elect the Vice Chair:** It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Dutton was elected as the Vice Chair.
3. **Declarations of interest:** None
4. **Minutes:** The minutes of the last Assets, Buildings and Parks Committee meeting held on the 22nd February, 2021 was accepted as a true record. The Committee had now been renamed and restructured as the Assets & Services Committee. (HTC monthly 6th December 2021, minute ref 69.10)
5. **Matters arising from the minutes:** None
6. **Terms of Reference:** It was **RESOLVED** that Committee approved the Terms of Reference for the Assets & Services Committee
7. **Transfer of Assets:** Update and review of the list of assets and locations. The Committee received and noted the list of assets and the individual information sheets and photos for each asset. A discussion followed on these assets and it was apparent that there may be some ambiguity as to the ownership, responsibilities and the definition of boundaries, flying freeholds (market place toilets for example), etc. that was not known or obvious from the information available. This was something that the Council's solicitor would need to determine once the transfer had been approved by ESC. It was agreed that the Chair, Cllr Fleming and Cllr Moseley would assist with this aspect of the transfer once it was underway. The Clerk had approached a number of solicitors for this role several months ago but this list needed to be updated and contacts re-established as soon as ESC agreed the transfer. The Clerk was reluctant to do this in case of incurring costs until there was indication that the deal was going through.

The Clerk reported that it had all gone very quiet again at ESC with regards to a date for the Cabinet to consider the asset transfer. The Chair offered to contact Kathryn Hurlock (ESC) Asset and Investment Manager, who had replaced Angus Williams, to see if she could apply any pressure to move it forward.

On the subject of the Park and the area proposed to be transferred, the Village Green was discussed, this mainly consisted of the New Reach river, towpath and an area of land to the North of the New Reach around the weir and the footbridge. The Clerk explained that it was not part of the transfer because East Suffolk Council denied ownership, despite Millennium Green Trust's attempts to prove otherwise. By default this area may become the responsibility of the Town Council and if the council was taking over the park it would make sense to claim it and then consider the best way of managing it. However, it was noted that the maintenance of this area could potentially be quite expensive.

8. **Condition Reports:** To review the condition reports. The Committee had been sent the link to all the condition surveys but this item had been covered to some degree in the discussion under item 7.

9. **Working Groups/Lead Councillors:** To consider forming working groups or appointing lead councillors for the following; Community Centre, Overview of the legal side of the transfer, insurance, London Rd Building and any others:

Community Centre: It was agreed that at some point a professional survey was required to gauge what residents and community groups would need from a new community building. It was too early to consider employing the services of a company to undertake this task as the developer had not started and so many other factors were in limbo. However, some work could be undertaken by the Committee in the form of a brief which would be required in order to go out to tender for the survey work. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Moseley would contact Keith Forster to see if he was interested as he had previously devoted considerable time and effort on the project when he had been a town councillor. Cllr Lewis also had a contact for someone who may have the skills and other suggestions were also noted.

10. **To consider budget/CIL requirements for 2022 – 2023:** The Clerk advised that East Suffolk Council had responded to the Precept requirements with a request for a budget from HTC as the Precept was now over £140,000. This would require further input from all the committees but clearly it was not possible to know accurately as it depended on when the transfer takes place and many other factors. The suggested budget lines included; London Road Building refurbishment, new boiler, professional fees, Norse contract and public toilet refurbishment. The Committee agreed that the Clerk should include these budget lines and any other relevant costs then this would be taken to the Finance & Governance Committee to approve for submission to ESC.

11. **Neighbourhood Plan:** To consider any indicated actions: Cllr Moseley had provided extracts from the Plan for all the committees to include in their agendas and action plans. For this committee the subjects were; community building, secondary school provision and community led housing.

12. **Communications:** The Chair suggested that as there was many changes happening in the town, a newsletter could be produced, perhaps bi-annually, every quarter or as required, to inform residents of any matters of interest. This could be distributed to the Library, community areas and shops for collection and possibly a letter drop as well. The Committee agreed that this could be beneficial but had concerns as to how much work it would involve for the clerks. [Since this proposal involved other committees, the Clerk would need to take this to the Finance & Governance Committee for further discussion]

13. **Next meeting.** It was agreed that rather than schedule a regular slot, the next meeting would be arranged when any decisions needed to be made and/or there were any developments on the community centre brief.

The meeting was closed at 4.15pm

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