

CHARTER TRUSTEES FOR THE CITY OF DURHAM

At the **Meeting** of the **Charter Trustees for the City of Durham** held in Committee Room 1B, County Hall, Durham, on Wednesday 29 October 2014 at 1.00 pm

Present: Councillor P Conway, (in the Chair) and Councillors J Armstrong, J Blakey, A Bonner, J Buckham, N Foster, K Corrigan, D Freeman, G Holland, A Hopgood, N Martin, B Moir, M Plews, M Simmons, P Taylor, J Turnbull, M Wilkes and M Williams

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Right Worshipful Mayor of Durham, Councillor J Robinson and Councillors D Bell, J Chaplow, S Guy, D Hall, M Nicholls, R Ormerod and D Stoker.

2 Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on the 18 June 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Revenue Outturn for the period ending 30 September 2014 and Projected Outturn to 31 March 2015

Charter Trustees considered a report of the Treasurer that provided information on the actual expenditure compared to the profiled budget for the period ending 30 September 2014; and the forecast of expenditure to 31 March 2015 in comparison to the 2014/15 original budget (for copy see file of minutes).

The Treasurer reported that at 30 September 2014 actual net expenditure was £26,331; an underspend of £2,463 against a profiled budget of £28,794. It was anticipated that actual expenditure at 31 March 2015 would be slightly lower than the original budget, therefore the sum required to be drawn from reserves to balance the budget would therefore be expected to reduce from £4,695 to £808.

Resolved:

- (i) That the outturn position for the period ended 30 September 2014 be noted.
- (ii) That the forecast outturn to 31 March 2015 be noted.

5 Conclusion of Audit for the year ended 31 March 2014

Charter Trustees considered a report of the Treasurer that advised of the completion of the audit of the annual return for the financial year ending 31 March 2014, which was carried out by BDO LLP (the external auditor of the Charter Trustees) (for copy see file of minutes).

The Treasurer reported the audit findings and advised on the actions that were required in order to satisfy the external auditor in the future.

Resolved:

- (i) That the audited annual return for 2013/14 be approved;
- (ii) That a risk assessment review of internal controls be reported to a future meeting during 2014/15, and annually thereafter;
- (iii) That a compilation of an asset register for 2014/15 be verified by internal audit.

6 Register of Assets - Agreement for transfer of historic property

Charter Trustees considered a report of the Clerk to the Charter Trustees that advised of a requirement following last year's Internal Audit report to complete a register of assets (for copy see file of minutes).

The Clerk to the Charter Trustees referred to the outcome of previous meetings from 2010 and 2011 with Durham County Council regarding suitable division of ownership and retention of various assets which were listed on a colour coded schedule.

Charter Trustees discussed the background and referred to previous reports culminating in that to the meeting of 19 July 2011 with schedule of assets and also to a written opinion of Judge Richard Lowdon's upon interpretation of The Charter Trust Regulations 2009.

Councillor J Blakey suggested that a working group be established to revisit the Register of Assets and progress an agreement upon the transfer of historic property.

Resolved:

That a cross party working group be established comprising of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and two other Trustees to be decided outside the meeting to seek agreement upon transfer of historic property and to revisit the Register of Assets.

7 Conservation of Photographs

Charter Trustees considered a report of Clerk to the Charter Trustees regarding a proposal to conserve original photographs of past royal visits which were on display in the Mayor's parlour in the Town Hall, Durham and were vulnerable to risks of theft, fire, damage, vandalism, and decay (for copy see file of minutes).

The Clerk to the Charter Trustees suggested that the framed photographs be removed and replaced with high quality copies for a minimal cost.

Charter Trustees welcomed the report and were of the opinion to conserve the original photographs in the County Records Office as they were more fragile.

Councillor A Hopgood commented that although the original photographs would be held in the County Records Office at County Hall, they would belong to the Mayoralty of the City of Durham and not owned by the County Council. The Clerk to the Charter Trustees added that photographs in the Mayor's parlour were identified on the asset list to be transferred to the Charter Trustees for the City of Durham.

Councillor J Blakey asked that the high quality copies be replaced in the original frames to be displayed in the Mayor's parlour.

Resolved:

That conservation of the royal visit photographs in the Mayor's parlour by way of high quality copies and the originals stored in archives be agreed.

8 Protocol and Procedures for Civic Occasions

Charter Trustees considered a report of the Clerk to the Charter Trustees that advised of the protocol arrangements and seek approval for the Mayor to determine matters of precedence and to agree in principle the extent of the invitation list for civic occasions (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor A Hopgood raised concern regarding vesting power in the Mayor of the day to be able to alter the time honoured protocol and procedure as set out in the report and suggested that the Clerk to the Charter Trustees be responsible for the procedures.

Councillor N Foster was confident that the Mayor of the day would not seek to alter the protocol and procedure on anything other than an exceptional circumstance and Trustees should accept that the protocol and procedure would generally apply.

Councillor J Buckham added that if it is accepted that protocol and procedure set out in the report would normally apply then it should only be an exceptional event when a decision should be taken to vary those procedures and the Mayor would be the most appropriate person to make such a decision.

After general discussions it was agreed to vary the wording of Recommendation 1 as follows:

That Charter Trustees note and agree the protocols in the report for attending civic occasions and that the Mayor of the day will decide any changes to orders of precedence in consultation with the Clerk to the Charter Trustees.

Charter Trustees discussed the extent of the invitation list for civic occasions taking into consideration the financial and logistical implications and individuals who had a direct connection with the City of Durham.

Councillor J Armstrong **Moved** that invitees to civic occasions include Past Chairman of Durham Unitary Council, Past Charter Trustees and Past Mayors of the City of Durham which was **Seconded** by Councillor J Buckham.

An amendment was **Moved** by Councillor A Hopgood, **Seconded** by Councillor N Martin as follows:

That Charter Trustees agreed to extend the list of invitees to civic occasions to include Past Charter Trustees and Past Mayors of the City of Durham.

After a vote was taken, the amendment was **Lost**.

A vote was then taken on Councillor J Armstrong's original Motion as follows:

That Charter Trustees agree to extend the list of invitees to civic occasions to include Past Chairman of Durham Unitary Council, Past Charter Trustees and Past Mayors of the City of Durham.

The motion was **Carried**.

Resolved:

- That Charter Trustees noted and agreed the protocols in the report for attending civic occasions and that the Mayor of the day would decide any changes to orders of precedence in consultation with the Clerk to the Charter Trustees.
- That Charter Trustees agreed to extend the list of invitees to civic occasions to include Past Chairman of Durham Unitary Council, Past Charter Trustees and Past Mayors of the City of Durham.

9 Any Other Business

The Treasurer informed Charter Trustees that work on the 2015/16 budget would start shortly and that a working group would be arranged comprising of the Mayor plus one person from each political group to be decided outside the meeting.

The Clerk reminded Trustees of future meeting dates:

- 3 December 2014
- 21 January 2015
- 1 April 2015
- 27 May 2015 - Annual Meeting

Councillor A Hopgood pointed out that the Annual Meeting had been arranged during half term when many people are away, she asked that half term week be avoided in the future.

The Clerk to Charter Trustees advised that a report relating to Civic Office support would be presented at the next meeting.