

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 1 November 2017 at 12.00 pm

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Durham Councillor B Kellett (in the Chair) and Councillors D Bell, E Bell, J Blakey, L Brown, J Chaplow, K Corrigan, S Dunn, D Freeman, A Hopgood, L Hovvels, , C Marshall, M McKeon, R Ormerod, E Scott, M Simmons, A Simpson, P Taylor, F Tinsley, J Turnbull and M Wilson

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E Mavin, L Mavin, D Stoker and M Wilkes.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on the 9 June and 21 June 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Conclusion of Audit for 2017

Charter Trustees considered a report of the Clerk to Charter Trustees that provided details of the conclusion of the Audit for year ended 31 March 2017 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Treasurer advised that the annual return was submitted in May 2017 and the external auditors had concluded that the information contained in the report was in accordance with proper practices. One minor matter arose which had been corrected and no other matters had arisen to give concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.

Resolved:

That the information contained in the report be noted.

5 Revenue Outturn for the period ending 30 September 2017 and Projected Outturn to 31 March 2018

The 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 2017; and the forecast of expenditure to 31 March 2018 in comparison to the 2017/18 original budget (for copy see file of minutes).

The Treasurer reported that at 30 September 2017 actual net expenditure was £38,048, an underspend of £6,006 against the profiled budget of £44,054.

It was anticipated that actual expenditure at 31 March 2018 would be slightly lower than the original budget, therefore the sum required to be drawn from reserves to balance the budget would be expected to reduce from £11,962 to £4,510.

The Treasurer reminded Trustees that reserves had been utilized to maintain council tax at the same level for a number of years and advised that a report detailing further options for budget setting next year would be provided to a future meeting.

Councillor Hopgood asked that an option be included in the report to freeze council tax and utilise reserves for the remainder of the election cycle (2018/19 to 2021/2022).

Councillor E Bell requested that capital outlays be considered and use reserves to enhance the Mayoral position as a number of Mayoral items were in disrepair and in need of replacement. The Treasurer advised that Trustees set the budget every year and utilise reserves as they see fit. He welcomed any ideas that would be beneficial to the role of Mayor which could then be built into next years budget.

Resolved:

- i) That the outturn position for the period ended 30 September 2017 be noted;
- ii) That the forecast outturn to 31 March 2018 be noted.

6 Freedom of the City - RAF

Charter Trustees considered a report of the Clerk to Charter Trustees that provided information of a request from the RAF for the consideration of granting the Freedom of the City (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Hovvels was in support of granting the Freedom of the City to the 607 squadron of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. As veteran champion for the County, she explained that work had been undertaken around the covenant that had been signed by all forces that would also promote the City of Durham and bring economic benefits. She added that celebrating the event would send a positive message to families in County Durham and promote community cohesion.

Councillor Hopgood fully supported the request and emphasised that it be agreed as Charter Trustees and not as County Councillors as it was a Durham City event and not to be taken over as a County Council event. Councillor Hovvels explained that she asked for the request to be considered by Charter Trustees as it was appropriated in terms of city heritage and connections with the forces. She also felt it was important to attract people from outside the area to attend events in Durham City.

Councillor Tinsley commented that the County Council do not have the authority and it was the Charter Trustees remit to bestow Freedom of the City requests.

Councillor Blakey added that partnership working would have to be undertaken with the County Council with regards to road closures and agreed with the recommendations to call a special meeting.

Councillor E Bell supported the recommendation and commented that extra expenditure be included in next years budget as there would be additional expenses involved in staging such an event.

Members felt it was fitting to commemorate the people that fought with great honour who served in the 607 Auxiliary Squadron. It was acknowledged that the people who served in the County Durham Regiment would have come from all areas of County Durham and Councillor Hovvels was thanked for recommending that Charter Trustees consider granting Freedom of the City to the RAF.

Resolved:

- (i) That the information contained in the report be noted;
- (ii) That a special meeting be convened to decide if the Freedom of the City request be granted.