

The finance manager explained that report gave a short update on the current position of Wells Recreations Ground and Bishops Barn. He explained that he and Councillor Halfhide had attended a meeting with two representatives from Wells City Council and the outcomes to date are included in the report.

A calculation of the special expenses rate had yet to be carried out however the structural survey of the barn was delivered to the City Council a few weeks ago. Mendip was now waiting to receive a response from Wells as to whether they want to take over being the trustee of the site.

The finance manager highlighted that the Charity Commissioner had been contacted they had said that they could see no issues with Mendip District Council transfer the trusteeship over to Wells City Council.

The finance manager informed the Committee that he had spoken to Mrs Siddons after the previous meeting and she was happy with the response given and indicated that a confirmation letter would not be needed. She did query the following point on page two as she did not understand what was meant by 'clear':

- A business plan to ensure both councils are clear of the operational and financial responsibilities of both councils.

The finance manager explained that both councils would be submitting reports on the transfer to their relevant Board/Committee meetings to ensure that there was transparency in what was taking place to the general public.

Members queried that amount of maintenance that needed to be carried out on the grounds. It was explained that due to the area being in the process of being transferred the council had not carried out its routine maintenance as Wells City Council had highlighted that if they were to take over then they would have specialists come in and carry out repairs.

A discussion took place around the sale of Park Cottage. The deputy finance manager explained that the tenant of the cottage had exercised his right to buy the property and the money from the sale of property would be transferred to Wells if they took over the trusteeship as the money was due to be used for maintenance of the area.

Concerns were raised that if the transfer took much longer the area would fall into further disrepair. The finance manager explained that if the process was to carry on into the new year then Mendip Council would have to carry out some maintenance works.

It was queried whether as a council it was a trustee of anything else and that if so, were officers ensuring that returns were being submitted to the Charity Commission.

	<p>The deputy finance manager informed the Committee that the Charity Commission did not express any real concerns that the returns had not been submitted. However more robust processes had now been put in place; he noted that submissions had slipped as not a lot of income was generated by the barn.</p> <p>It was noted that the Council was a trustee of another charity but it was of a different type to this one.</p> <p>RESOLVED Members noted the report and the comments made by Mrs Siddons.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>Asset Management Update</p> <p>The finance manager explained that earlier this week the council had met with officers from Somerset County Council to consider partnership arrangements for asset management as the council no longer had an asset management officer. It was considered that due to the small amount of assets the council currently had that there was no reason to employ a full time team.</p> <p>The County Council were now scoping out the work that they could carry out for Mendip and would be drafting a new asset management plan.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted concerns raised by the public over the Frome Leisure Centre. The finance manager informed the Committee that the centre building was leased by Mendip from County and this was one of the reasons why it was considered best to work in partnership with them rather than another authority. He also noted that the funding for the partnership had been agreed through the improvement plan.</p> <p>It was noted that Alder King carried out an inspection of the council's assets every three years and produced valuations which were included on the council's balance sheets. Officers from different departments carried out routine inspections as part of their day jobs.</p> <p>On an operational side the council had a lot of officers involved in different areas of asset management and this needed pulling altogether, which was part of the work the County team were looking to do.</p> <p>Councillor Halfhide asked if a risk assessment looking at the pros and cons of going into partnership had been carried and if so could if this information could be brought to the Committee. The finance manager explained that this process had taken place but he emphasised that he had never brought that type of report to committee before.</p>	

	<p>Councillor Halfhide then queried how the Committee would assess the merits and procedure for setting up these partnership arrangements.</p> <p>The Chair explained that she would be including an item on the terms of reference at the next meeting, before this however she wanted to have detailed discussions with the finance manager and the chief executive. She explained that she would also be looking at how other Audit Committees in other authorities functioned. She noted that she did not want to overload Members with work nor did she want to see duplication with work being carried out elsewhere in the authority.</p> <p>Councillor Hewitt-Cooper queried whether the non operational assets were liabilities. The finance manager explained that the council had a small number of non operational assets such as the redundant public convinces at Northload Street in Glastonbury. He noted that Glastonbury Town Council had shown an interest in taking over the building however like many of the assets the council did not want let the land go as it could be used as a ransom strip by those who bought it.</p> <p>It was noted that the council did not have any major assets and it did not own commercial properties which was how many councils had an income stream from renting commercial property.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Members noted the report · The terms of reference for the Committee would be placed on the next agenda 	<p>Peter McKenzie</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Use of Resources Update</p> <p>The deputy finance manager gave a PowerPoint Presentation which gave background detail on Use of Resources and informed the Committee about the officer working group who were concentrating on Use of Resources.</p> <p>It was explained that the Committee had seen a report with a lot of reds appearing at the previous meeting as officers had been very critical with their views in the self evaluation and had tried to get into the mind set of the external auditors. He noted that there was a significant amount of work to do but the group were working hard and progress would be made with a report being brought to Committee at its next meeting in January.</p> <p>The Committee noted that although there were some gaps in the councils processes which had led to the auditors finding the council needed greatly improving a lot could be achieved through keeping and highlighting better evidence of how the council achieves what it is doing.</p>	

	<p>It was raised that the council had to go through big cultural changes in the way it worked with risk management, performance and value for money and that it was understood that changes in culture took time to come about. Although quick changes could be made to ensure targets were met it would be some time before the new way of working was imbedded.</p> <p>The deputy finance manager informed the Committee that the council did not have to be green with every one of its targets to achieve a level two however it did have to be predominately green and show that the amber targets were on well on the way to being achieved.</p> <p>The Committee asked for a full update report to come back to the January meeting which included reasons for any targets that had slipped and were unlikely to be green by the March deadline.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The presentation slides are to be emailed the members of the Committee · A full update on the Use of Resources would be brought to the next meeting 	<p>Adam Savery</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy</p> <p>The finance manager gave a PowerPoint Presentation on the background to the Medium Term Resource Strategy for 2009/10 to 2013/14.</p> <p>The Chair queried whether increasing council tax year on year over the previous three years by 0.5% would have had an impact on the current financial problem. The finance manager explained that an increase of 0.5% each year would not have made a big difference as there were also other factors involved such as the Government block grants decreasing with the increase in council tax.</p> <p>Members queried whether the council would be able to require some more capital income. The finance manager explained that this was an area the council was working on with the County Council. Instead of selling the land to the developer the council could keep the land and take a percentage of the profits as land owner. It was noted that if the council did decide to go down this route then a report would have to be submitted to Full Council for approval.</p> <p>A discussion took place on next years budget proposals which were hoped to be released during December. It was noted that Cabinet had yet to have their final discussions on the budget which meant the Committee could not yet review the decisions.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p>	

	The finance manager is to circulate the date for the financial skills training day.	Peter McKenzie
10	Member Training Committee members noted that they were happy with the presentations that they had received and felt that along with the financial skills training day that was coming up they had covered their training needs for the current time.	
11	Urgent Business None.	

The meeting closed at approximately 6.45 pm.