

Minutes of the Finance and Human Resources committee 19.05.16

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN BANSONS ON THURSDAY 19TH MAY 2016 AT 8.00pm

Present: C. Feetham (Chair) J. Bicknell D. Birch
P. Bolden J. Devonald N. Fletcher*
B. Freeman J. Reynolds A. Wingfield*

*Non committee members

Officers: J. Farr (Deputy Town Clerk)
M. Letch (locum clerk)

Public: One member of the press
Seven members of the public

Other: EFDC Cllr B. Surtees

01/16 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs J. Browning (annual leave).

Action

02/16 Declarations of personal and or prejudicial interest

There were no declarations of interest.

03/16 Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda

No members of the public wished to address the committee.

04/16 To agree the minutes of the Finance meeting held on 24 March 2016

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

05/16 To agree the minutes of the Human Resources meeting held on 7 April 2016

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

06/16 Clerk's Report

Banking charges

From 11 June 2016 the Unity Trust Bank would be charging the Council for each transaction. The Deputy Clerk was exploring other options and would provide a report to the next Finance and Human Resources committee meeting.

Planning training

A new date for this training session was being arranged with the trainer.

Asset register

Work on updating the asset register had been postponed due to a lack of time. Mr Letch would be assisting with this project.

Policies

Work on reviewing and updating policies had been postponed due to staff shortage

Risk assessments

Work on reviewing and updating all risk assessments had been postponed due to staff shortages

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Business continuity plan

Work on the draft plan had been postponed due to staff shortages

Chapel

Work on the plans to refurbish the Chapel and find a use for the building had been postponed due to staff shortages

Health and safety

Work on the Health and Safety action points had been postponed due to staff shortages

Scout hut lease

The Council had contacted Scout leaders to try to ascertain further information on their request for a long lease. One Scout leader was out of the country until the end of May and no response had been received from another.

Job descriptions

Mr Letch would be reviewing all job descriptions as part of the staff consultation regarding staff restructure following the redundancy of the Jubilee Park manager.

Mini bus risk assessment

This was considered and adopted at the Full Council meeting on 12 May 2016.

07/16 Finance Reporting

- To note the bank reconciliations for April 2016
- To note the detailed balance sheet for April 2016

Cllr Reynolds asked for clarification on the VAT amount. Mr Letch suggested that the Council may wish to rename its reserve accounts so that the true amount of reserves would be better understood.

- To note the payments over £100 for March and April 2016

Cllr Bolden asked for clarification on three amounts.

08/16 Mini Bus

- To receive the budget as at 31 March 2016
- To receive the budget as at 30 April 2016

Councillors noted the mini bus budgets.

09/16 To receive an initial report on the staff consultation

The staff consultation process had begun and a brief report was provided for Councillors consideration.

It was reported that the staff consultation process had begun as well as job evaluations for Jubilee Park staff. Councillors were reminded that an increase in responsibility would necessarily mean an increase in the salary budget of approx. £3,000 per year including on costs.

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It was reported that a further meeting with Jubilee Park staff would take place in the next few days and Mr Letch asked permission to speak to them about a possible increase in pay. It was agreed that a re-evaluation of all job descriptions would take place after 6 months to ensure that staff and Councillors were satisfied with the result.

Given the urgency of this project it was agreed that a further report be provided to the next scheduled Full Council meeting.

Cllr Bicknell proposed that Mr Letch be authorised to discuss remuneration with staff and to provide feedback to Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr Freeman.

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- Further staff consultation to take place including discussion on staff remuneration and a report provided to Full Council.

10/16 To consider a draft Policy on reserves, investments and virements and make a recommendation to Full Council

The draft policy was considered. Cllr Reynolds pointed out that current Council reserves totalled only 35% and not the minimum of 40% as specified in the policy.

Cllr Reynolds proposed to recommend the policy to Full Council and this was seconded by Cllr Freeman.

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend the draft policy on reserves, investments and virements to Full Council

11/16 Recommendations from Open Spaces

- To agree the suggested 5% rise in cemetery fees and make a recommendation to Full Council

Cllr Reynolds proposed to recommend to Full Council a rise of 5% in cemetery fees and this was seconded by Cllr Bicknell

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council a rise of 5% in cemetery fees

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12/16 Recommendations from Jubilee Park committee

- To consider an increase in prices and make a recommendation to Full Council
- To increase all bar prices by 5%

Cllr Bolden proposed to recommend to Full Council a rise of 5% in bar prices and this was seconded by Cllr Freeman.

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council a rise of 5% in bar prices
- To increase all pitch / court fees by 5%

Cllr Freeman proposed to recommend to Full Council an increase in pitch /court fees of 5% and this was seconded by Cllr Birch

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council an increase in pitch /court fees of 5%
- To increase room hire fees to £100 for the large room and to retain the fee at £20 for the small room

Councillors were concerned that this level of increase was more expensive than other local halls. It was agreed that the Council would obtain comparison costs with other halls and information on how often Jubilee Park is hired out.

Cllr Devonald proposed not to raise the fees and to refer this back to Jubilee Park and Open Spaces committee for further consideration. This was seconded by Cllr Freeman.

Vote –
For – 6
Against – 1

AGREED

- Not to raise the fees and to refer this back to Jubilee Park and Open Spaces committee for further consideration.
- To retain the damage deposit at £200 per booking

Cllr Bicknell proposed that this item be deferred and that deposits were considered as part of the overhaul of the hire agreement. This was seconded by Cllr Birch.

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Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To defer this item and consider this proposal as part of the overhaul of the hire agreement.

13/16 To consider insurance cover for cash handling

There were limits to the amount of cash that could be kept in one place. To meet the conditions placed on the Council by the insurance company it would be necessary for staff to bank any takings twice per week.

Councillors noted this information.

14/16 Love Lane building

- To consider letting the building to an outside organisation

It was suggested that the Council considered letting the old Council building in Love Lane to an outside organisation.

Cllr Freeman proposed that the Council contacts a local estate agent to obtain advice on market rent and the condition of the building and this was seconded by Cllr Devonald.

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- That the Council contacts a local estate agent to obtain advice on market rent and the condition of the building

Councillors asked that Cllr Reynolds accompany Council staff to meet with the estate agent.

15/16 Recording of meetings

- To receive a draft policy on members of the press and public recording Council meetings and make a recommendation to Full Council

A draft policy was provided for Councillors consideration. It was recommended that a statement be added to the website to inform the public and press of this policy. Suggested wording is as follows –

Please note that following the publication of the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, members of the public can record and publish audio and video records of this meeting. If you wish to attend the meeting, but do not wish to be recorded doing so, please contact the clerk for guidance.

Cllr Reynolds proposed that the draft policy be recommended to Full Council and this was seconded by Cllr Freeman.

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Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- The draft policy be recommended to Full Council

16/16 Training

- To review the Council's training statement of intent, make any amendments necessary and make a recommendation to Full Council

The draft training statement was provided for Councillors consideration.

Cllr Freeman proposed to recommend the training statement of intent to Full Council and this was seconded by Cllr Birch.

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend the training statement of intent to Full Council

- To receive information on the training record for 2016 for staff and cllrs

A list of all courses completed or booked by Councillors and staff was provided for Councillors attention.

Councillors noted this information.

- To note the available funds in the training budget for 2016/17 and any committed spend

The budget set aside for this financial year was £2,000. It was reported that £160 had been spent to date and £785 was committed for various courses.

Councillors noted this information.

- Consider the provision of E – learning courses for Council staff

Cllr Birch suggested that the Council considers E - learning courses run by an alternative company before any decision was made.

It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

- To consider and agree attendance at EALC courses – list attached

A list of all courses offered by EALC is attached for Councillors consideration.

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It was reported that these courses were available during the day time only. Mr Letch pointed out the benefits of Councillors attending these courses as this provided an opportunity to meet with other Councillors. However, if several Councillors were interested in a particular course he may be able to provide a shorter bespoke course delivered at Basons.

It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Signed

Chair

Date