

Minutes of the Finance and Human Resources committee 30.06.16

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN BANSONS ON THURSDAY 30TH JUNE 2016 AT 8.00pm

Present: D. Birch (chair) J. Battersby* J. Browning
J. Devonald N. Fletcher* B. Freeman
J. Reynolds

*Non committee members

Officers: A. Middlehurst (Clerk)
J. Farr (Deputy Clerk)

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

17/16 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Feetham (prior engagement), Cllr Bicknell (annual leave) and Cllr Bolden (attending a wedding).

Action

18/16 Declarations of personal and or prejudicial interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19/16 Public participation session with respect to items on the agenda

No members of the public wished to address the committee.

20/16 To agree the minutes of the Finance and Human Resources meeting held on 19 May 2016

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

21/16 Clerk's Report

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for the committee were agreed at Full Council on 2 June 2016

Training Statement of Intent

The Training Statement of Intent was agreed at Full Council on 2 June

Emergency Plan

An updated version of the Emergency Plan was provided to all Councillors.

Business Continuity Plan

Work on this plan had been postponed due to lack of staff time

Planning Training

The training was being arranged by the Planning, Environment and PR Clerk.

Scout lease

The Council had contacted the Scouts regarding reasons for extending the lease but no response had been received to date.

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Love Lane Council building

Initial investigations had taken place with regard to the future letting of the building.

22/16 Finance Reporting

- To note the bank reconciliation and detailed balance sheet for May 2016

The committee noted the bank reconciliation. Cllr Reynolds asked that the committee considered renaming the accounts to provide clarity.

- To note the full list of payments for May 2016

The list of payments was noted by the committee.

23/16 Mini Bus

- To receive the budget as at 31 May 2016

The committee noted the budget. It was reported that there was a problem with the mini bus gear box and repairs had been arranged.

24/16 Internal audit

To receive the final report from the internal auditor

A copy of the final report was provided for Councillors information.

Cllr Reynolds asked for an update on each action point. The Clerk reported that each point had either been completed or was currently being drafted. A report on progress would be provided to the next committee meeting.

25/16 Banking charges and Investments

- To receive information on the new bank charges to be levied by the Council's bank, consider alternative banking arrangements and make a recommendation to Full Council

At the last Finance and Human Resources committee meeting it was reported that from 11 June 2016 the Unity Trust Bank would be charging the Council for each transaction. The Clerk reported that she was investigating alternative banks as well as alternative methods of receiving payments to reduce the charges. It was recommended that the Council did not change banks at present and that staff would work to limit the accrual of charges where possible.

Councillors noted this information.

- To note the maturity of the Nationwide Business Fixed Rate Saver account and consider reinvesting the funds.

It was reported that the Council held £27,500 in the above account at a rate of 1.20% gross. These monies were part of the S106 monies allocated to Shelley Park. The Clerk recommended that the Council re-invest the money and that the interest accrued would be transferred to general reserves.

The committee noted and agreed this recommendation. The appropriate forms were signed by Cllrs Browning and Reynolds.

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26/16 Standing Orders

To consider the draft document recommended by the Standing Orders working group and make a recommendation to Full Council

Draft Standing Orders were provided for Councillor's consideration.

Cllr Reynolds thanked Mr Letch for his work on this project and also fellow councillors on the working group.

Cllr Reynolds queried Standing Order 3 (w) "A meeting shall not exceed a period of 2 hours".

Cllr Browning proposed that Standing Order 3 (w) be amended to read that Standing Orders could be suspended to allow the meeting to continue for a maximum of an additional 30 minutes. This was seconded by Cllr Devonald.

Cllr Reynolds proposed that Standing Order 3(w) be amended to read that Standing Orders could be suspended to allow the meeting to proceed until all items of business on the agenda had been completed. This was seconded by Cllr Freeman.

Vote for Cllr Browning's proposal –

For – 3

Against – 2

AGREED

- To amend Standing Orders 3 (w) to read that Standing Orders could be suspended to allow the meeting to proceed until all items of business have been completed.

Cllr Reynolds commented on Standing Order 9 (f) and recommended that the chair should have the final decision on agenda items.

The Clerk reported that the Proper Officer issued the summons and therefore, the final decision was that of the Proper Officer who works in conjunction with the Chairman. Cllr Browning stated that he had every confidence in the officers to make an informed decision.

Cllr Browning proposed that the Standing Order remain as drafted with no amendment. This was seconded by Cllr Devonald.

Vote –

For – 5

AGREED

- Not to amend Standing Order 9 (f)

27/16 Bansons letting fees and policy

- To review the current fees and make a recommendation to Full Council

Copies of the fee structure and the policy were provided for Councillors information. The fees were last increased in September 2014 and the policy was agreed in January 2015.

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Cllr Browning proposed that the committee recommend to Full Council that the fees remain the same and this was seconded by Cllr Reynolds.

Vote –
For – 4
Cllr Freeman abstained.

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council that fees for the hire of Bansons are not amended
- To review the current lettings policy and make a recommendation to Full Council

Cllr Browning proposed that the committee recommends to Full Council that the Bansons hire policy remain the same and this was seconded by Cllr Devonald.

Vote –
For – 4
Cllr Freeman abstained.

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council that the Bansons hire policy is not amended.

28/16 Policies

To receive an update on all Council policies

Cllr Reynolds commented that as the original disciplinary policy was included in the Staff Handbook Councillors had not had sight of this policy.

The update on policies was noted by Councillors.

29/16 Training

- To receive information on the training budget for 2016/17

The budget set aside for 2016/17 was £2,000. £330 had been spent to date and the following is committed: –

Planning (date tbc)	£250
General Power of Competence (date tbc)	£250
Cemetery management	£50 x 2
Cilca submission (Clerk and Deputy)	£200
TOTAL	£800

- To receive information on the training completed by Councillors in 2016

A copy of the training record for Councillors was provided for Councillors information

Councillors noted the report.

- To consider the training needs of staff and agree any courses necessary

it was reported that the Admin Assistant and Café supervisor were booked on a First Aid course in July and the Deputy Clerk and Admin Assistant were booked a course on Cemetery management in October.

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The staff review had highlighted several courses that were required for the Jubilee Park site manager and Café manager and a list was provided for Councillors information.

The Clerk reported that training would take place in priority order.

- To consider providers of E-learning courses and agree to this expenditure and a supplier

At the Finance and Human Resources committee meeting on 19 May it was reported that Ellis Whittam could provide E learning courses for staff. Cllr Birch suggested that the Council consider alternative suppliers and it was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

Councillors considered the costs for both suppliers. The Clerk recommended that this decision was deferred until the Council had made a decision regarding the future of Jubilee Park.

Cllr Browning proposed that this item was deferred and this was seconded by Cllr Freeman.

Vote –
For – 5

AGREED

- To defer the decision on E learning courses for staff.

➤ To consider the training needs of councillors and agree any courses necessary
A list of courses offered by EALC was provided for Councillors consideration. The Clerk recommended that training for staff was a priority and that any decision on Councillor training should be deferred until later in the year.

Cllr Browning proposed to defer this item until later in the year and this was seconded by Cllr Freeman

Vote –
For – 5

AGREED

- To defer any decision on Councillor training until later in the year.

30/16 Nature Reserve

The committee considered the recommendation from Open Spaces committee to contact the neighbour regarding his use of land at the Nature Reserve. The Clerk recommended that staff visit the resident as well as confirming the arrangement in writing.

Cllr Freeman proposed that the Council writes to the resident to confirm arrangements for use of the land and this was seconded by Cllr Browning.

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Vote –
For – 5

AGREED

- The Council to write to the resident to confirm the use of land at the Nature Reserve

31/16 Chapel

- To receive information on the public consultation and to agree a course of action

The Council conducted a public consultation on possible future uses of the Chapel. Suggestions have been received from members of the public including a tourist centre and a local museum. The committee was reminded that the Chapel was still a consecrated building and was on the EFDC Local List of buildings. Cllr Reynolds reminded the committee that Council staff still used the Chapel for accommodation and an alternative would be required.

Councillors agreed that the Deputy Clerk consult St Martin's Church PCC regarding possible deconsecration of the Chapel.

32/16 Office Administration

Mr Letch had been commissioned to evaluate the Jubilee Park staff. It would be beneficial for the Council to have an evaluation of all staff and their current duties and responsibilities.

Cllr Reynolds asked if the review of office staff could include staffing needs following the possible removal of Jubilee Park from Council control and the allocation of staff time to each Council function. The Clerk reminded the committee that allocation of staff time had not yet been agreed by Full Council so Mr Letch could not be asked to include this.

Cllr Reynolds proposed that Mr Letch be tasked with carrying out a review of Admin staff and this was seconded by Cllr Browning.

Vote –
For – 5

AGREED

- Mr Letch to carry out a review of admin staff.

33/16 Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure

Cllr Browning advised the committee –

Advice has been sought from EALC who passed the query to NALC solicitor who advises the Council not to use the current procedure.

Claus 4.9 if an employee/Clerk is dissatisfied with the Council's decision it can be referred to NALC or the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). The solicitor has not come across these clauses in other Council grievance procedures and in his opinion it would probably be unworkable if all 9,000 Councils operated such arrangements.

Therefore there is no appeal process as it does not exist. The disciplinary and grievance policy should comply with the ACAS code of practice. The recommendation is to review a new policy and agree to adopt.

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It was reported that advice had been sought from Ellis Whittam who suggested amendments to the timescales proposed.

Cllr Browning proposed that the references to 5 days be changed to 10 working days and references to 25 days be changed to 15 working days and for the Council to adopt the policies. Cllr Freeman seconded the proposal.

Vote –
For – 5

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council to adopt the draft Grievance and Disciplinary policies

The Clerk thanked the Chairman for his assistance with this project.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Date

Signed

Chairman