

Human Resources Committee Meeting 10.03.16

MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING OF ONGAR TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 10 MARCH 2016 AT 8 PM

PRESENT:

Councillors:	J. Bicknell	D. Birch*	J. Browning
	J. Devonald*	C. Feetham (chair)	B. Freeman
	A. Kaye	J. Reynolds	D. Roberts
	J. Rushton*		

*Not a member of the committee

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

Public: Two members of the public

Press: Two members of the press

38/15 Apologies for absence

Cllr P. Bolden was absent without apologies.

39/15 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

40/15 Public participation

No members of the public wished to address the committee.

41/15 To agree the minutes of the meeting of 10 December 2015

The minutes of the meeting were reviewed and agreed as a true record and signed by the chairman.

42/15 Clerk's Report

Freedom of Information

The Council received two FOI requests in February 2016 requesting details of the Jubilee Park working group financial calculations and the cost to the rate payers of the extra Council meetings.

Community Resilience (Emergency Plan)

The Deputy Clerk updated the Emergency Plan in January 2016 and a new plan had been issued to all Councillors.

Health and Safety

The Fragile Roof signs had been purchased and placed on the Chapel.

Standards of Practice

The final documents required for the Quality Standard of Council practice were awaiting Full Council approval. The Deputy Clerk was working on the documents required for the final stage (Gold standard).

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Training

Councillors received training in January 2016 from the Clerk on procedures, agenda setting, finances, etc.

The planned training on planning issues scheduled for 17 March 2016 had been cancelled due to a lack of member's attendance.

Councillors would receive training in the General Power of Competence from Angie Balcombe, Parish and CIF Co-ordinator at ECC, date to be confirmed.

The Deputy Clerk and Admin Assistant attended the End of Year Accounting training on 25 February 2016.

The Clerk attended the Transparency training on 2 Feb 2016.

The Admin Assistant attended the ECC Pensions course on 2 Feb 2016.

It was reported that EFDC would be holding a course on Chairmanship Skills on 23 May 2016 at the Civic Offices in Epping at a cost of £50 per delegate. Councillors interested in attending were asked to inform the Clerk.

43/15 Policies

To receive a report on the review of all Policies

A list of all policies was provided for Councillors information. This was noted by the committee.

44/15 Procedure to fill a casual vacancy occurring on the Town Council

To consider the draft procedure, make any changes necessary and make recommendation to Full Council

Councillors reviewed the draft document and made one amendment.

Cllr A. Kaye proposed that with that one amendment the draft procedure should be recommended to Full Council. Cllr J. Reynolds seconded.

Vote –

For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend the draft procedure to Full council.

45/15 Procedure to fill vacancies and recruitment policy

To consider the draft procedure, make any changes necessary and make recommendation to Full Council

Councillors reviewed the draft document. Cllr D. Roberts proposed that the draft policy be recommended to Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr J. Browning.

Vote –

For – 7

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AGREED

- To recommend the draft policy to Full Council

46/15 Risk assessments

i) To receive a report on the progress of drafting and approving Risk Assessments

The list of risk assessments was noted by the committee.

ii) To consider the draft Risk Assessment for the Mini Bus and make a recommendation to Finance committee

Councillors reviewed the draft document.

Cllr D. Roberts proposed that the draft risk assessment be recommended to Finance committee and this was seconded by Cllr J. Browning.

Vote –

For - 7

AGREED

- To recommend the draft risk assessment to Finance committee

47/15 Training

i) To receive a report on the End of Year Accounting training session attended by staff

Judith Farr and Amanda Laws attended the training course held at EALC offices in Great Dunmow. Notes on the course were provided for Councillors information.

Councillors noted the report.

ii) To note the available funds in the training budget for 2015/16 and committed spend for 2016/17

As at 29 February 2016 there was £444 remaining in the training budget for 2015/16 with £250 committed for the Planning training scheduled for 17 March 2016.

A training budget of £2,000 was agreed by Full Council on 28 January 2016 for the financial year 2016/17 of which £200 is committed for Cilca submission fees for Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

Councillors noted this information.

iii) To note the training completed by Councillors and staff during 2015

A training record for 2015 showing all training Councillors and staff had received during 2015 was provided to Councillors.

Councillors noted this information.

iv) To consider a training plan for each Councillor and staff member

The Standards of Practice Scheme (Gold Standard) requires that all Councillors had an individual development plan. A document was drafted that set out training needs for each Councillor as well as staff members. Councillors noted this information and asked that the Planning training be rescheduled.

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v) To authorise staff training on VAT

At the End of Year Accounting training it was recommended that all staff receive training on the VAT applicable to Council activities and that this takes place before the end of year close of the accounts.

Cllr D. Roberts proposed that staff receive the recommended training and this was seconded by Cllr J. Browning.

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To authorise staff training on VAT to take place before the end of the financial year.

48/15 Financial Regulations

To amend the Financial Regulations to reflect the changes arising from the Public Contacts Regulations 2015, make any changes necessary and make a recommendation to Full Council
The Council was advised by EALC and NALC that the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 would impact on the current Financial Regulations. Councillors considered the draft changes.

Cllr A. Kaye proposed to recommend the draft Financial Regulations to Full Council and this was seconded by Cllr J. Reynolds.

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend the draft Financial Regulations to Full Council

49/15 Standing Orders

i) To consider an amendment to Standing Orders to add Jubilee Park committee to the list of Standing committees and make a recommendation to Full Council

The Standing Orders agreed on 21 May 2015 itemised the Standing Committees but omitted the Jubilee Park committee so it was necessary to add this to the list of Standing Committees

Cllr A. Kaye proposed to recommend the addition to Full Council and this was seconded by Cllr Bicknell.

Vote –
For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend the change to Standing Orders to include Jubilee Park committee

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ii) To consider removing the Open Forum part of standard agendas and replacing with a Public Participation Session that is not restricted to agenda items only and make a recommendation to Full Council

This item was recommended to Full Council by Human Resources committee on 24 September 2015. The Full Council meeting on 19 November 2015 rejected the recommendation and referred the item back to Human Resources committee.

Cllr Freeman proposed that the Public Participation item on agendas be expanded to include questions and statements from the public on any matter and not just those on the agenda. This was seconded by Cllr D. Roberts.

Vote –

For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council to expand the Public Participation item on agendas to include questions and statements from the public on any matter.

iii) To consider an amendment to Standing Orders to include the changes arising from the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, agree any changes necessary and make a recommendation to Full Council

The Council was advised by EALC and NALC that the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 would impact on the current Standing Orders. The draft reflected the necessary changes.

Cllr J. Browning proposed that the draft change to include information on Public Contracts Regulations 2015 be recommended to Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr A. Kaye.

Vote –

For – 7

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council the draft changes to Standing Orders to reflect the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

iv) To consider an amendment to the Standing Orders to include the NALC model Standing Orders item on “Motions for a meeting that require written notice to be given to the Proper Officer” and make a recommendation to Full Council

At the Human Resources committee meeting on 24 September 2015 councillors recommended the changes to Full Council. At the Full Council meeting on 19 November 2015 councillors voted not to accept the recommendation of the Human Resources committee.

The Council sought advice from NALC which confirmed that as Councillors did not have individual powers to make decisions on agenda items, therefore only the Clerk had the legal power to decide the agenda.

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Cllr D. Roberts proposed that the change to Standing Orders to include motions for a meeting that requires written notice to be given to the Proper Officer be recommended to Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr J Browning.

Vote –
For – 5
Against – 2

AGREED

- To recommend to Full Council the draft change to Standing Orders to include motions for a meeting that requires written notice to the Proper Officer

v) To consider amending the membership of committees to appoint councillors on a pro-rata basis members representing different political groups/residents associations/independent
Cllr Reynolds suggested this amendment to the Standing Orders to allow membership of committees to reflect all political groups/residents association/independent.

NALC advised that s. 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires the composition of a committee of a principal authority (e.g. EFDC) to represent the proportions that the members of the authority were divided by their membership of a political party. There was no such statutory requirement for the composition of a committee of a parish council. NALC was unaware of any principal authority or parish council which required committees to reflect the proportion of their members who were also members of interest groups or other organisations e.g. a residents association, a local charity or an amateur dramatics group. If Councillors decided to agree this proposal the decision may be open to question by local residents.

Cllr D. Roberts expressed her concerns regarding this proposal. Cllr A. Kaye read a written statement which was attached to these minutes. Cllr B. Freeman suggested that this proposal offered some protection to members of groups other than Ongar Residents Association to be members of committees.

Cllr B. Freeman proposed that the amendment be rejected and not recommended to Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr D. Roberts.

Vote –
For – 6
Against – 1

AGREED

- To reject the proposed change to Standing Orders to amend the membership of committees to appoint councillors on a pro-rata basis members representing different political groups/residents associations/independent

Cllr B. Freeman and Cllr J. Devonald left the meeting at 9.25 pm.

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vi) To consider an amendment to allow substitution of members of committees who are unable to attend committee meetings with a nominated person

Cllr Reynolds suggested this amendment to the Standing Orders which would allow committee members who were unable to attend meetings to nominate another Councillor to attend on their behalf.

Councillors were concerned that a member substituting for another may not be fully aware of all the relevant information to make a decision.

Cllr D. Birch left the meeting at 9.28 pm.

Cllr D. Roberts proposed that this proposal be rejected and this was seconded by Cllr A. Kaye.

Vote –

For – 5

Against – 1

AGREED

- Not to amend the Standing Orders or make a recommendation to Full Council.

50/15 Health and Safety

i) To receive a report on progress with action points following the health and safety visit by Ellis Whittam

The Deputy Clerk had completed all the action points on the list provided by Ellis Whittam. An updated list was provided for Councillor's information.

Councillors noted this information.

ii) To receive information on the Council's adopted Harassment Policy.

One of the action points from Ellis Whittam's health and safety visit was for the Council to have an adopted Harassment Policy. A copy of the Council's adopted policy as provided by Ellis Whittam was presented for Councillor's attention.

Councillors noted the Policy.

iii) To consider the draft Violence and Bullying at Work Policy, make any changes necessary and make a recommendation to Full Council

One of the action points from Ellis Whittam's health and safety visit recommended that the Council had a Violence and Bullying at Work Policy. The document was drafted with input from Ellis Whittam.

Councillors reviewed the draft policy.

Cllr A. Kaye proposed to recommend the draft Policy to Full Council and this was seconded by Cllr D. Roberts.

AGREED

- To recommend the draft Policy to Full Council

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iv) To receive the results of the staff consultation on Stress at Work and make a recommendation to Full Council.

One of the action points from Ellis Whittam's health and safety visit recommended that the Council conduct a Stress at Work consultation amongst Council staff. The consultation was drafted with the assistance of Ellis Whittam. Not all staff had been able to complete the consultation before the meeting. Councillors asked that this item be added to the next committee agenda.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm

Signed:

Chair of Committee

Date: