

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
10th June 2019 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: D Abbott
C Copleston
M S Kennedy
R Morgan Substitute
S Thorne
K Wattingham
T Welch

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager
Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: D Jones

9925 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

Nominee: Cllr Kennedy Nominated by: Cllr Copleston
Seconded by: Cllr Welch

No other nominations were received.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Kennedy was elected as Vice-Chair for the Corporate Services Committee for the municipal year 2019 – 2020.

9926 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Jones (Cllr Morgan substituted)

9927 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

9928 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

9929 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2019.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

Minute number 9824: The Mayoral Robes Policy was deferred to a future meeting pending confirmation of the wording within the policy being non-discriminatory. Members were advised that confirmation was still awaited.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2019 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

9930 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

Personnel Sub-Committee: 21st January 2019.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings of the 21st January 2019.

9931 COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS & TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with Standing Order 4.j.iii. Council was required to review its delegation arrangements to committees and sub committees.

These arrangements were set out in the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference. This document set out the system of delegation to the Committees, Sub Committees and Working Groups of the Council.

Resolved: To note the information.

9932 BUDGET REVIEW & INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT

Members received a report on the Corporate Services Committee budget for 2019/20 supported by the relevant extract from the approved budget for 2019/20 and income and expenditure report.

Members saw from the budget report there was no budget provision for any future projects. However, the following had been initiated:

- An approach had been made to Central Bedfordshire Council regarding the potential availability of s106 funding. A substantive response was awaited.
- Officers had also investigated grant sources, although projects need to meet the grant criteria and often have to be match funded. This remained a work in progress.
- The council had also sought to vary an existing s106 so that it could be utilised in a more flexible way. This remained ongoing due to delays caused by other parties to the agreement.

Members queried officer recommendation 3; specifically, the need for a replacement boiler and whether this had been budgeted for. Members were advised that this had been included the budget.

3. To approve the works to the office as recommended in the Condition Survey regarding electrical testing and repair, lighting renewals and boiler renewal.

The welfare of staff was raised and the necessity to have hot water in the council offices. Concerns were raised regarding the breach of Health & Safety if the work was not carried out as recommended by the condition survey.

It was suggested that new members were given the opportunity to read the condition survey.

Members agreed officer recommendations 1,2 and 4.

An amendment to recommendation 3 was proposed to read:

To approve the works to the office as recommended in the Condition Survey regarding electrical testing and repair and lighting renewals.

Members voted on the amended recommendation. A recorded vote was requested:

Members for: Cllr Morgan, Cllr Wattingham, Cllr Abbott.
Members against: Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Copleston, Cllr Welch.
Abstentions: Cllr Thorne.

The chair used his casting vote and voted against the amended recommendation.

Accordingly, the amendment was not carried.

Members voted on the officer recommendation. A recorded vote was requested:

Members for: Cllr Thorne, Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Copleston, Cllr Welch.
Members against: Cllr Abbott, Cllr Wattingham.
Abstentions: Cllr Morgan.

Accordingly, the officer recommendation was carried.

- Resolved:**
- 1. To note the virement within cost centre 190 of £100 from 190-4017 to 190-4038**
 - 2. To approve the virement of £660 from 190-4026 to 302-4034 (Website)**
 - 3. To approve the works to the office as recommended in the Condition Survey regarding electrical testing and repair, lighting renewals and boiler renewal.**
 - 4. To note at this stage the predicted deficits in 190-4001 (£5,820) and 191-4005 (£4,007).**

9933 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members received the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements from February 2019 to March 2019.

Resolved: 1. To approve the monthly Bank and Cash Reconciliation statements from February 2019 to March 2019;
2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.

9934 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members received a list of cheque payments for the period February 2019 to April 2019.

Resolved: To receive and note the list of cheque payments made in the period February, March and April 2019 approved for payment by the Town Clerk and two bank signatories.

9935 INVESTMENT REPORT

In accordance with Committee Functions, Financial Regulations and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements.

The Corporate Services Committee were to oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including:

To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including where, length and amount.

Cllr Morgan highlighted the value and importance of the Finance Training provided to members and wished to thank the Town Clerk and Accounts & Cemetery Officer who led the session.

Resolved: To note the information.

9936 PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD REPAYMENTS ANNUAL REPORT

In accordance with the Committee Functions & Terms of Reference and Financial Regulations, Members were presented with an annual report to provide detail on the council's loans including current value, repayments and early settlement options as they stand at 1st April 2019.

Resolved: To note the information.

9937 REVIEW OF VISION – CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Members received an extract from the Houghton Regis: Our 2020 Vision as it related to this committee which updated Members on the current status of the agreed Outcomes.

Resolved: To note the report.

9938 POLICY DOCUMENT REVIEW

Members received, and were requested to, consider the Policy Document Review.

Resolved: To note the report.

9939 CHAIRMANSHIP GUIDANCE POLICY

Town Council was required to review every 4 years the Chairmanship Guidance Policy.

Members received a copy of the approved Policy updated to reflect the revised Standing Order references, which were reviewed at the Town Council meeting held on the 25th March 2019. It was suggested that it remained suitable and fit for purpose.

Members of this Committee were asked to consider the Chairmanship Guidance Policy and make a recommendation to Town Council for its approval.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Chairmanship Policy be approved.

9940 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Town Council was required to review its Complaints Procedure annually.

Members received a copy of the approved document updated, with tracked changes, to reflect guidance from NALC, issued December 2018.

Members had requested some clarification on some of the wording within the policy.

It was suggested by members that where, within the policy, it stated 'in writing' this should include e-mails when receiving complaints, however, when providing responses or decisions, these should be sent via royal mail, first class post.

Subject to the discussed amendments, members agreed the policy.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Complaints Procedure be approved.

9941 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & MODEL SCHEME OF PUBLICATION

The Town Council was required to review annually the Freedom of Information Act (2000) Policy and the Model Publication Scheme. Members received a copy of the approved document. Some amendments had been made, shown as tracked changes, to reflect changes in legislation. It was suggested that it remained suitable and fit for purpose.

Members of this Committee were asked to consider the Freedom of Information Act (2000) Policy and Model Publication Scheme and make a recommendation to Town Council for approval.

Members discussed the need of reviewing annually. It was agreed that as this document remained live therefore, unless changes had been made, it was not necessary to review annually.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Freedom of Information Act (2000) Policy and the Model Publication Scheme be approved.

9942 HUMAN RESOURCES PROVISION

At the Personnel Sub-Committee held on the 15th April 2019. Members considered a report detailing quotations that had been sought to provide this provision and agreed to continue with HR Solutions as the Town Councils HR provider.

Resolved: To recommend that HR Solutions be employed as the Town Councils HR provider, from 22nd August 2019.

9943 VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Members received a report and draft policy in regard to the engagement of volunteers.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Volunteering Policy be approved.

9944 COUNCILLORS EMAIL ADDRESSES

Members received a report in support of the provision and use of Town Council email address for all Members.

Members queried if all councillors had their Houghton Regis Town Council e-mail addresses operating, Members were advised that two members of council, by choice, had not activated their Houghton Regis Town Council e-mail addresses.

One of the members who had chosen not to activate their Houghton Regis Town Council e-mail address, raised his concerns regarding the security of the Houghton Regis Town Council issued e-mail addresses. Concerns were expressed that the emails could be accessed, at any time, by any officer, via the server. It was requested that the wording be amended to state under what circumstances the emails would be accessed.

The recommendation was agreed subject to suitable amended wording stating under what circumstances e-mail would be accessed. It was suggested that Cllr Abbott provide suitable wording.

A recorded vote was requested on the officer recommendation.

Members in favour of the officer recommendation: Cllr Kennedy, Cllr Welch, Cllr Morgan, Cllr Thorne, Cllr Wattingham, Cllr Copleston.

Members against: Cllr Abbott

Abstentions: 0

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that it be mandatory for all elected Town Councillors to use an official Town Council email address for all Town Council official correspondence.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.17pm

Dated this 23rd day of September 2019

Chairman