

HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
Corporate Services Committee
4th March 2019 at 7.30pm.

Present: Councillors: D Abbott Chairman
 J Carroll
 Ms J Hillyard
 C Slough Substitution
 A Swain
 K Wattingham
 T Welch

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

 Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: M Kennedy

9813 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor M Kennedy (Councillor C Slough substituted).

9814 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

9815 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

9816 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2018.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

An update was requested, under Minute number 9691, Disciplinary and Grievance policy. Members were advised that the policy had had minor amendments made to it, as agreed at the meeting held on the 26th November 2018 and was now due to go to Town Council for ratification.

A query was raised regarding the photocopier contract and whether the issues had been resolved. Members were advised that there was no update to report.

Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2018 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.

9817 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS

Personnel Sub-Committee: 15th October 2018.

Resolved: To receive the Minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings of 15th October 2018.

9818 BUDGET REVIEW

Members received the income and expenditure report, with significant variances highlighted, for Corporate Services Committee to date.

Members discussed the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's travel allowance to be included within the mayoral allowances. It was suggested that should this be agreed, this may impact on the number of events the Mayor could hold. It was generally felt that this was not supported. Members discussed that some training events were held in Biggleswade, which was some distance away. It was suggested that events / functions held within Houghton Regis should not be claimed for. It was discussed that there should be a policy depicting the roles and responsibilities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, it was suggested that the new council administration may wish to consider drawing up a policy to this effect.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the report;**
- 2. From 2019/20 to require that travel costs relating to training be allocated to the training budget;**
- 3. To vire from 190-4008 £1000 to 190-4021 to cover the predicted shortfall;**
- 4. To vire from 190-4008 £400 to 190-4023 to cover this predicted shortfall.**

9819 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS

Members were requested to receive the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements from November 2018 to January 2019.

Members voted to approve the recommendation:

In favour: 6

Abstention: 1

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the monthly Bank and Cash Reconciliation statements from November 2018 to January 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.**

9820 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS

Members received a list of cheque payments for the period November 2018 to January 2019.

Members voted to approve the recommendation:

In favour: 6

Abstention: 1

Resolved: To note the information.

9821 INVESTMENT REPORT

In accordance with Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 8 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.

Members wished to thank the Accounts & Cemetery Officer for the presentation of information in the form of pie charts as it was easier to absorb the data in this format.

Members voted to approve the recommendation:

In favour: 6

Abstention: 1

Resolved: To note the information.

9822 RENEWAL OF BACS AND CHAPS PAYMENTS

Members were advised that the approval of the use of Direct Debit, Standing Order, BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution every year.

For information the Town Council no longer uses CHAPS as a payment method as the Town Council no longer has a fax machine and NatWest CHAPS department will only accept faxed instructions.

Members were asked to consider and endorse the list of Direct Debits and Standing Orders as attached.

Resolved:

- 1. To approve the use of BACS method of payment.**
- 2. To approve the use of Direct Debit and Standing Order method of payment.**

9823 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 status of the agreed outcomes.

Resolved: To note the report.

9824 REPORT ON MAYORAL ROBES

Members received a report and draft policy on the wearing of ceremonial robes.

Members were concerned that the wording within the policy could be deemed as discriminatory and requested that clarification on this matter be sought. It was questioned whether the Town Clerk or Town Council should have the authority to offer dispensation for the wearing of the robes. It was suggested that if the issue was of a personal nature, it may not be appropriate to take this matter to full council for open discussion. It was suggested that the wearing of the robes could form part of the Mayoral policy as mentioned at minute number 9818.

An amendment to the policy was proposed by altering the word 'required' to 'expected':

Proposed by: Cllr Swain Seconded by: Ms J Hillyard

This was put to vote:

All in favour of the amendment to alter the policy wording.

Members agreed to defer this item to a future meeting in order to obtain advice on whether the policy could be deemed as discriminatory.

9825 CO-OPTION POLICY

Members received a report and draft policy on Co-option.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Co-option Policy be approved.

9826 CAPABILITY POLICY

At the previous Corporate Services meeting held on the 26th November 2018, Members of this Committee were asked to consider amendments to the Capability Policy and make a recommendation to Town Council for its approval.

Members felt that some of the wording was inconsistent and needed to be clear. It was felt that all written warnings should be authorised by the Town Clerk but that the use of 'may' within the document contradicted this. These amendments have been made with the use of the word 'shall' in their place. In addition to this member's felt that clarity was obtained for section 13.6. Members received a copy of the policy along with tracked changes.

A minor amendment to 13.6 of the policy was suggested, replacing the word 'or' with 'failing that'.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Capability Policy be approved subject to the agreed amendment.

9827 LOCAL GOVT PENSION SCHEME: STATEMENT OF LOCAL DISCRETION

Town Council was required to annually review the Local Government Pension Scheme:

Review of Statement of Local Discretions. Members received a copy of the approved document. There had been no amendments to the Regulations, therefore it was suggested that it remained suitable and fit for purpose.

Members of this Committee were asked to consider the Local Government Pension Scheme: Review of Statement of Local Discretions and make a recommendation to Town Council for its approval.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Local Government Pension Scheme: Review of Statement of Local Discretions be approved.

9828 HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK POLICY

Town Council was required to undertake a review of its Health and Safety at Work policy.

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

Councillor K Wattingham wished it noted that he had raised concerns, in the past, regarding 3.9 in the policy; Fire and Evacuation. Concerns had been raised at previous meetings that the fire door leading from the Small Meeting room was, on occasion, blocked by cars on the forecourt.

Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Health and Safety Policy be approved.

9829 INSURANCE AGREEMENT - RENEWAL

The insurance for the Town Council was due for renewal on 1st June 2019. In accordance with Standing Orders quotations had been sought. All quotes had been prepared on a like for like basis and all provided adequate and suitable cover for the property, assets and activities of the Town Council.

Resolved: To appoint company 1, as the Town Councils insurance provider, for a period of three years.

9830 INTERIM AUDIT REPORT – INTERIM REVIEW

Members received an interim internal audit for consideration. Members noted that there were no significant issues of concern regarding the internal audit review however two minor issues for consideration were included in section 3.

Members suggested with modern day living, an electronic payment system for users to utilise would offer a more efficient service, with cheques not being extensively used and cash brought to the Town Council offices as the only alternative for residents to make payments. Members were advised that this was being investigated.

Resolved: To note the report.

9831 S106 FUNDING

At the last meeting of the Corporate Services Committee, members requested further information in regard to the expiry dates for older s106 agreements. Members were provided the information, below, via email dated 3rd December 2018.

- CB/14/03047/OUT r/o Old Red Lion £1,120,401 – 15.09.27
- CB/14/03056/OUT land at Bedford Rd £3,261,191 – 08.06.28
- SB/08/00388/FULL Land at Sandringham Drive £80,653 remaining, - 31.12.20
- SB/07/01448/OUT Land at Houghton Quarry £251,727 remaining, - 02.11.21
- CB/10/02465/FULL 5,7, & 8, The Quadrant, Leafields £2,932 remaining, - 03.04.22
- CB/12/02786/FULL 6a The Quadrant £1064 remaining, - 04.04.23
- CB/12/04455/FULL 8 Cemetery Rd £3,590 remaining, - 13.09.28
- CB/02618/FULL 10A Dunstable Rd £1,607 remaining – 15.12.26

The remaining four agreements had spend by dates following the receipt of an s106 contribution.

- CB/13/00546/FULL 11, Moore Crescent £7,390
- CB/15/02223/OUT Windy Willows, Sundon Rd £305,834
- CB/15/00297/OUT HRN2 £30,641,403
- CB/12/03613/OUT HRN1 £36,977,084

For information, as of April 2015 legislation changed. S106 monies were levied in accordance with the legal tests set out in the CIL Regulations 2010, of which there were three. This means that HRN1 is under the old legislation and HRN2 was under the new legislation.

Members were advised that this information was also available on the Central Bedfordshire Council website.

The Chair took a moment to thank councillors for all their hard work and efforts for the Corporate Services Committee.

Resolved: To note the report.

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.16pm
Dated this 10th day of June 2019**

Chairman