

**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2020  
AT TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES LEDBURY**

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**PRESENT: Councillors Bannister, Eakin, Harvey (Chair) and Whattler**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Angie Price – Town Clerk**

**F128. APOLOGIES**

**Apologies were received from Councillors Howells and Manns.**

**F129. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**None received**

**F130. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**No members of the public were present**

Councillor Harvey thanked the Clerk for the agenda pack stating that it was an improvement on past agenda's, and she asked the Clerk to pass the Committee's thanks on to all staff that had been involved with the preparation of the agenda.

**F131. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE  
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL  
PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2019**

Councillor Harvey referred to minute no. F112 in respect of the fees and charges for the cemetery and council buildings. The Clerk advised that she had hoped to have further information available for this to be considered alongside the budget setting process.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of a meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee held on 28 November 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

**F132. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT**

Members asked for clarification on the Datacenta Hosting invoices. The Clerk advised that these were for two different years payments. Members asked the Clerk to seek clarification on why the 2018/19 payments are being made at the same time as the 19/20 payments.

Members asked that future payment reports include more information in the description; for example, in respect of the Engineer Call Out by OMS and what office furniture had been purchased. They also asked that invoice dates be provided on the reports.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the schedule of payments consisting of cheque and BACS payments in the amount of £13,641.83 be approved.**

**F133. TO RECEIVE THE RECORD OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2019**

Members were advised that due to staff sickness this information was not available.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the record of receipts and payments for 5 November and December 2019 be deferred to the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee scheduled for 27 February 2020.**

**F134. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AUDIT**

**Special Audit**

Members were advised that the company appointed to undertake the special audit had advised the Town Clerk that whilst reviewing documents in relation to the audit it had become apparent that they had an "independence threat" in relation to the work being carried out and therefore they could not continue with the audit.

They had agreed not to charge the council for any work undertaken on behalf of the Council and had returned all documents that had been provided to them.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Clerk be authorised to continue to identify Auditing Companies that would be interested in providing a quote for the work and that quotes be submitted to a future meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee or Full Council, whichever is the earliest.**

**F135. TO RECEIVE THE BALANCE SHEET AND TRIAL BALANCE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019**

Members were advised that due to staff sickness this information was not available.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the balance sheet and trial balance as at 31 December 2019 be deferred to the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee scheduled for 27 February 2020.**

**F136. TO VERIFY BANK STATEMENTS AND BANK RECONCILIATIONS PRODUCED FOR THE MONTHS OF NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2019**

Members were advised that due to staff sickness this information was not available.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the verification of the bank statements and reconciliations for November and December 2019 be deferred to the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee scheduled for 27 February 2020.**

**F137. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

**Resources Committee – Operational Role of Officers/Councillors**

Members were requested to consider a draft Councillor & Staff Protocol & Principles of Good Practice and a draft Civic Protocol.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Draft Councillor & Staff Protocol & Principles of Good Practice be recommended to Full Council for approval.
2. That the Draft Civic Protocol be recommended to Full Council for approval, subject to the following amendments:
  - i. Paragraph 2.3 – “decision” be amended to read “position”.
  - ii. Paragraph 4.2 – This paragraph to be amended to state when the funds will be paid to the charities and in what proportion.

“Funds raised for the Mayor’s charities cannot be used for any other purpose other than as a donation to the

charity/charities identified as the Mayor's chosen charities for the year.

- iii. A new paragraph to be added 4.4 to state either of the following two options:
    - a. "Any funds accrued by donations or events held by the Mayor will be paid in an equal amount to all of the chosen charities at the end of their term of office."
- OR
- b. "Any funds accrued by donations or events held by the Mayor will be paid to the charity/'charities throughout the year as and when they are raised."
- iii. Paragraph 7.1 – "Council" should be amended to read "Clerk"
  - iv. Paragraph 9.2 – this paragraph should be amended to state a sum of £20 as per the Council's Code of Conduct.
  - v. Item 10 – Civic Events should be amended to show which annual events all councillors are expected to attend, and that past Mayors should be invited to attend.

#### **F138. DRAFT BUDGET 2020/21**

Members were advised that due to staff sickness the budget papers were not available at the meeting. It was suggested that this item should be deferred to an extraordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee on Monday, 3 February 2020 at 6.00 pm, for this item only.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That the Draft Budget 2020/21 be deferred to an extraordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee on Monday, 3 February 2020, at 6.00 pm for this item only.**

#### **F139. SUBSCRIPTIONS**

##### **Listed Property Owners' Club**

Members were requested to authorise the Clerk to subscribe to the Listed Property Owners Club and that the annual fee be paid by Direct Debit of £48 per month, in order to benefit from the 20% discount offered for payment of this type.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Clerk be authorised to subscribe to the Listed Property Owners Club and that the annual fee be paid by Direct Debit of £48 per month, in order to benefit from the 20% discount offered for payment of this type.**

**F140. GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Members were requested to give consider to the following grant applications:

1. Over £500 applications
  - a. Ledbury Poetry Festival

Members felt that as they had continually supported the Ledbury Poetry Festival year on year they should offer them a three-year grant of £2,500 per annum. It was suggested that the Clerk be asked to write to the Poetry Festival to enquire whether the Council could be recognised as a sponsor of a specific event during the Festival. Councillor Bannister suggested the “Poetry Slam” event.

- b. Ledbury Bells

Members were provided with additional information from Ledbury Bells which had been received since the despatch of the agenda. The additional advice received advised that they were now in receipt of tenders for the ancillary works to the tower. They advised that the tenders were higher than they had budgeted for and despite their successful sponsorship programme and fund-raising efforts they now need to raise £30,000 for the ancillary works.

A proposal was made and seconded that the council provide a grant of £5,000 towards the cost of the ancillary works.

2. Multi-year applications
  - a. Dream Your Future Counselling

Members felt that there was not enough information in respect of this application and instructed the Clerk to make enquires into the organisation before they could make a final decision.

**RESOLVED:**

**1. a. Ledbury Poetry Festival**

That a three-year grant of £2,500 per annum be awarded to the Poetry Festival and that the Clerk contact the Poetry Festival to enquire whether the Council could be recognised as the sponsor for the “Poetry Slam” event for this donation.

**b. Ledbury Bells**

That a grant of £5,000 be awarded to the Ledbury Bells towards the ancillary works needed to the tower.

**2. a. Dream Your Future Counselling**

That the Town Clerk be instructed to find further information about this organisation, to include what if any accreditation they have and to which professional bodies, are they included on the Hereford Council Wish Portal, which local schools do they work with and do they have any testimonials that they can provide.

**F141. UNITY TRUST BANK**

Members were provided with information on Unity Bank with a view to considering switching their banking provider.

**RESOLVED:**

That a **RECOMMENDATION** be made to Full Council that the Council change from their current banking provider to Unity Trust Bank.

**F142. RISK MANAGEMENT – SECTION 1 FINANCE**

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Section 1 of the Risk Management Register “Finance” be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee, scheduled for 27 February 2020 following a review by the Clerk of several areas within this section of the Risk Register.**
- 2. That the mitigation in respect of “Failure to set a precept by the HC deadline”, be amended to read “Set a project plan for the budget development plan and agree this at the first**

**meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee after September.**

**F143. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE ICT MANAGED SYSTEM PROJECT**

Member were provided with an update on the need for an ICT meeting to be arranged as a matter of urgency to discuss the proposed new website along with some other outstanding items.

**RESOLVED:**

**That a meeting of the ICT Working Party be arranged for Wednesday, 5 February 2020 at a time to be confirmed.**

**F144. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)**

**RESOLVED:**

**The Clerk had nothing to report in respect of GDPR.**

**F145. COUNCIL POLICIES**

Members were requested to give consideration to the following policies:

1. Draft Concerns/Complaints Policy
2. Draft Local Resolution Policy
3. Capability Policy
4. Disciplinary Policy
5. Grievance Policy

**RECOMMENDED:**

**To Council that: -**

1. **That the Draft Concerns/Complaints Policy be approved subject to the following amendments:**
  - i. **First paragraph – third line down – remove “Members or”;**
  - ii. **Informal Resolution – add the following – “Or in the case of a complaint against a Member you will be referred first to the Local Resolution Policy and if necessary then to the standard complaints procedure as outlined in the Councillor Code of Conduct and Hereford Council Standards procedure.**  
[https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/602/standards\\_and\\_ethics](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/602/standards_and_ethics);

- iii. **Outcome – that the second paragraph be amended to read – “If we find we (the Council) got it wrong, we will tell you what and why it happened and show that we understand how the mistake affected you.”;**
  - iv. **That the Clerk confirm whether all references to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are relevant or whether this has been superseded by the Localism Act 2011 and as such should state “Monitoring Officer” as an alternative.**
- 2. That the Draft Local Resolution Policy be approved subject to the following amendments:**
- i. **That the Clerk confirm whether all references to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman are relevant or whether this has been superseded by the Localism Act 2011 and as such should state “Monitoring Officer” as an alternative;**
  - ii. **Remove sentence in opening paragraph that starts “Often when receiving ...”;**
  - iii. **Policy section to be inserted above opening paragraphs;**
  - iv. **The Complaint – replace “accused” with “subject”**
  - v. **Last paragraph change Standards Committee for “Standards Process adopted by Hereford Council”.**
- 3. That the Draft Capability Policy be approved subject to the following amendments:**
- i. **Procedure – “..interim informal meetings..” be amended to read “interim supervision meetings ...”;**
  - ii. **Initial Action amend “an informal discussion” with “a meeting”;**
- 4. That the Draft Disciplinary Policy be approved subject to the following amendments:**
- i. **Introduction – third paragraph – amend to read “...except in the case of gross misconduct or poor performance via the capability policy, when the penalty may be dismissal, ...”;**



- ii. **Where “Counselling” is used this be changed to “Performance Management”;**
  - iii. **“Adjudicating Officer” be amended to read either Town Clerk or HR Consultants, whichever is deemed appropriate”;**
  - iv. **That the remainder of the policy be removed and reference to the ACAS Code of Practice be made in its place.**
  - v. **Disciplinary Guidelines – refer to guidelines provided by ACAS Code of Practice.**
5. **That the Draft Grievance Policy be approved subject to the following amendments:**
- i. **Refer to ACAS Code of Practice**
  - ii. **Replace “Appeals Committee” with “Appeals Panel”.**

**F146. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN**

**RESOLVED:**

**That due to the work involved in reviewing the Draft Corporate Plan, this item be deferred to be considered at a one-off session that all Councillors are invited to, prior to its submission to a future Council meeting.**

**F147. STAFF AND COUNCILLOR TRAINING MATRIX**

Members were provided with a copy of a staff and councillor Training Matrix.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the staff and councillor training matrix be received and noted.**

**F148. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

**That it be noted that the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 27 February 2020.**

**F149. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, in the public interest the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

**F150. RENEWAL PROPOSAL FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY SUPPORT**

Members were requested to give consideration to an early renewal notice received from the Councils current provider for Health & Safety support.

The Clerk had hoped to have costs for a similar service from their current HR Providers for consideration at the meeting, however, this had not been received.

**RESOLVED:**

**That in order for the Council to meet the requirements of its Financial Regulations, the Clerk contact the Councils HR Consultants in respect of a quote for Health & Safety support.**

**F151. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

**Resources Committee**

**Staffing Resources**

Members considered the report in respect of staffing resources and the recommendation from the Resources Committee and agreed that now that the staffing was considered to be a full compliment as per the previous organisational review, this would be a good time to undertake a further review of the whole organisation.

The review should consist of a full role review of all staff, Committee Structure and meeting cycle and the skills and availability of staff to meet the needs of the Council.

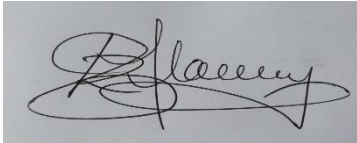
It was suggested that the review should look at other councils of a similar size and nature for methods of good practice, in particular councils that have achieved Star Awards.

Concerns were raised on the time that this would take to complete, and it was suggested that post holders 48 and 50 should offered the opportunity to increase their hours from 30 hours a week to 37.5 hours as an interim measure.

## RECOMMENDATION

1. That post holders 48 and 50 be offered the opportunity to increase their working hours from 30 to 37.5 hours per week.
2. That an organisational review be undertaken as detailed above in order to establish the needs of the council in respect of staffing, and operational requirements.

The meeting ended at 9.37pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Blaney', is written over a grey rectangular background.

**Signed (Chairperson)**

**Dated : 27/02/2020**