

Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting

Monday 10th February 2020

Present: Cllrs David Owens (Chair), Linda Edwards, Peter Freeman, John Hedley Jones, Bob Walpole

Officers: Huw Thomas (RFO), Shân Loudon

(Upstairs room, Burry Port Institute 10am – 12.55pm)

1. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Cllr Hugh Shepardson.

2. To receive members' declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

3. To confirm the minutes of the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee meetings held on Monday 6th January and Monday 13th January 2020

Subject to two word changes, the minutes of the above meetings were approved as a true record.

Action: Admin Assistant

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

With reference to item 6 of the previous meeting, it was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr Bob Walpole that One Voice Wales be contacted to provide bespoke training on module 21 – “Understanding Local Government Finance – Advanced”. When the training date has been arranged, all Councillors to be invited. All members voted in favour.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk

A member asked the Clerk for an update on the recruitment of an apprentice. It was noted that this position has been approved by the Facilities and Assets Committee and has been budgeted for. It was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee support the recruitment of an apprentice with Paul Mann and one member of this Committee carrying out the interviews.

5. To consider the budget monitoring report

The budget monitoring reports for all Committees had previously been circulated. The Acting Town Clerk went through the report with members, identifying any exceptions.

Facilities income is well ahead of target at 92.8%. Expenditure is currently under budget at 67.6% but it was noted that there is outstanding utility spend due to a meter dispute.

Chair *DM Owens*

09/03/2020

Finance, Governance and Personnel income was higher than expected. It was noted that salary costs had not been broken out into the appropriate committee budgets and that the forthcoming election costs will be taken from reserves.

Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee spend is currently at 47.9%. The marketing and promotions budget is still available but radio advertising is due to be discussed at their next meeting. It was suggested that the budget could be used for Town of Culture events. A suggestion was made that there should be public recognition of the artists that performed at the recent concert. It was agreed that this be referred to the forthcoming Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk

The budget monitoring report was accepted by all members.

6. Update on staff and Councillor training

It was agreed that the training matrix be circulated with the agenda for the Annual Meeting.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk

Place plan training was discussed and it was noted that this should be referred to the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee as it would come within their budget.

Cllr Bob Walpole enquired about planning training. It was noted that Planning Aid Wales provide this training. However, enquiries also to be made with One Voice Wales to see if they cover this area.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk

7. Update on payment of Councillor allowances

A copy of the relevant section from the Independent Remuneration of Panel for Wales Annual Report had been circulated with the agenda. It was noted that certain determinations are mandatory. It was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr John Hedley Jones that this report be accepted and that the Clerk prepare a policy document to include those payments relevant to this Council and when they should be made. Councillor payments should also be referred to within our Financial Regulations. It was proposed and accepted that this document should be circulated to members with the March Town Council agenda.

Action: Town Clerk/Assistant Town Clerk

8. Consideration of overall committee structure

A document prepared by Cllr Mike Theodoulou had been circulated with the agenda and a follow up document prepared by Cllr David Owens emailed to members prior to the meeting. It was commented that there are a large number of committees. It was suggested that agendas should always be accompanied by reports and updates in order that Councillors have time to read and digest the information prior to the meeting which enables better decision making and streamlines the meeting.

In terms of the structure, both papers are relevant and will be discussed at the next Chairs Committee meeting.

Chair *DM Owens*

09/03/2020

It was noted that three Standing Committees have a budget and are accountable to the full Town Council. The role of the Chairs Committee is one of coordination. All Councillors can be members of any of the Standing Committees depending on their area of interest and expertise. A meeting of the Chairs Committee could possibly be called by the Clerk to deal with an urgent issue.

It was raised that the Risk Management Group could be merged with this Committee covering both financial and operational risks. Health and safety issues would be covered by the Facilities and Assets Committee, risk management for events would be prepared by the Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee and the Chairs Committee could collate these into one document. Financial risk will be covered by the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee

It was noted that the number of forums will decrease from 6 to 4. The workload of the forums needs to be reviewed by the Clerk and Community Development Officer. The current set up which has a Councillor as Chair and the CDO as staff member will be reviewed after 2 years. The Regeneration and Community Engagement Committee will need to review the relationship between the Council and the forums at this time. It was commented that the Resilience forum will work closely with the Town Council with regard to parks and footpaths.

9. Consideration of terms of reference

The terms of reference, as approved at the 2019 Annual Meeting, had been circulated with the agenda. There were no changes requested.

10. Update on review of Standing Orders

The Clerk informed members that he had compared the Town Council's standing orders with those produced by NALC. There are a number of items that differ:

Notice of meetings – NALC 3 days, Town Council 5 days.


After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Bob Walpole and seconded by Cllr David Owens that the Town Council standing orders remain at 5 days for Town Council meetings and be amended to 3 days prior notification for Standing Committees. All members were in agreement.

As the meeting had now reached two hours duration, it was proposed by Cllr David Owens and seconded by Cllr Peter Freeman that Standing Orders, in relation to meeting duration, be suspended to allow the meeting to continue.

Standing Orders currently state that meetings should not exceed two hours. It was commented that if reports are circulated with the agenda, this should reduce the meeting time, as Councillors will have had the information prior to the meeting. After discussion, it was agreed that this committee would make a strong recommendation to Town Council that meetings should not exceed two hours, and this should only be suspended in an emergency.

Standing Orders currently state that Town Council papers have to be served by post/hand delivered. It was agreed to keep this at present, until all Councillors have a council laptop or tablet.

At present, once a decision has been made it can not be changed within 6 months. It was agreed to keep this duration.

Chair 

09/03/2020

11. Consideration of a reserves policy

The recommendation is for Council's to hold between 3 to 9 months of expenditure for reserves. It has been agreed by Town Council that reserves should be utilised for certain projects and to keep the precept increase down. After discussion, it was agreed that reserves should be kept at 4 months and that any request that would take this figure below 4 months should be referred to this Committee with the recommendation that reserves never go below 3 months or exceed 6 months.

12. Consideration of risk management/compliance policy

This was discussed under agenda item 8.

13. Consideration of updated Financial Regulations

It was noted that due to change in staff titles this document need to be updated. Further clarification is required on the delegation of responsibilities to staff. It was noted that decisions can not be delegated to one Councillor. Where the document refers to the Chair, the Vice Chair should be included. There needs to be a level of expenditure that staff can authorise, without referral to a Councillor. It was also discussed that the paragraph relating to BACS payments needs to be updated to allow the majority of Council payments to be made electronically; two Councillor signatures would still be required as a minimum.

14. To consider any referred matters

One item had been referred from the Facilities and Assets Committee which was repairs required in the commercial kitchen to the oven, hob and warming oven. These do not confirm to current regulations. The Projects Manager had prepared a report, together with one quote. It was noted that any costs associated with this would need to be taken from reserves as they have not been budgeted for. After discussion it was agreed to ask the Projects Manager to obtain two additional competitive quotes to include installation costs.

Action: Projects Manager

It was **PROPOSED** by Cllr John Hedley Jones and seconded by Cllr Linda Edwards that the meeting move into camera. All members were in agreement.

In camera - That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

15. To confirm the confidential minutes of the meeting held on Monday 13th January 2020

The minutes of the meeting were confirmed as a true record.

16. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

17. Consideration of the Schedule of Accounts

The schedule of accounts was discussed and accepted.

Chair *DM Owens*

09/03/2020

18. Consideration of outstanding invoices

There were no outstanding invoices.

19. Update on staffing issues

Staffing issues were discussed.

Chair *LM Owens*
09/03/2020