

Finance Governance and Personnel Committee Meeting

Monday 14th October 2019

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

Officers: Huw Thomas (RFO), Shan Loudon

(Senior Citizens Hall, Burry Port 10am – 12.10pm)

Prior to the first agenda item, Cllr Bob Walpole informed members that he would be resigning as Vice Chair of the Committee, which would lead to him standing down from the Chairs Committee. He was also resigning from the Audit and Resolutions Sub Committee.

1. To receive apologies for absence

No apologies had been received.

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 meeting held on Monday 9th September 2019

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

Action: Admin Assistant

4. To consider any matters arising from the minutes

Members asked for an update regarding the work currently being undertaken by the Town Council's solicitor. The Clerk informed them that our solicitor had referred the Town Council to a specialist company for advice regarding solar panels. The issue of possible disputes with HMRC was discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk would check the Council's insurance policy in this respect.

Action: Acting Town Clerk

It was noted that the Risk Management Sub Committee had not yet met and it was agreed that the first meeting should be arranged in the near future.

Action: Risk Management Sub Committee members

5. To consider the budget monitoring report

The Acting Town Clerk went through the report with members, noting any exceptions. It was commented that where underspend is shown it could mean projects are not being moved forward. After a brief discussion on any exceptions the report was accepted.

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6. Consideration of staff and Councillor training

It was noted that this is an agenda item for each Standing Committee. Linda Rees Jones, Monitoring Officer and Robert Edgecombe, Deputy Monitoring Officer attended the Council on 2nd October 2019 to provide Code of Conduct training as instructed by the Ombudsman. Unfortunately not all Councillors were able to attend and apologies had been received from Cllrs Pam Every, Amanda Fox, John James, Stephen James, Shirley Matthews. All other Councillors were in attendance, together with Officers.

It was agreed that a list of One Voice Wales training courses would be circulated with the next agenda.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk

Cllr Bob Walpole informed members that he and Cllr Richard Adler would be attending Wellbeing training that evening.

7. Approval of One Voice Wales recommended changes to the Financial Regulations

The amendment to the Financial Regulations as recommended by One Voice Wales had been circulated to members. After brief discussion, it was recommended that this change be made and noted when the Regulations are approved at the next Annual Meeting.

Action: Acting Town Clerk

It was also noted that due to a change in staff titles and a new member of staff the regulations need to be amended to reflect this. It was agreed that an addendum be placed noting that all reference to Technical Services Officer (TSO) should be applicable to Project Manager.

Action: Acting Town Clerk

8. Consideration of the need for a Town Council credit control policy

The Clerk informed members that he had been asked to create a bad debt policy. However, it was noted that the Council required an overall Credit Control Policy which would include direction for staff for action regarding late payment of invoices. It was agreed that the Clerk would present a policy for approval at the November meeting.

Action: Acting Town Clerk

9. To consider a petty cash policy

Members were reminded that Councillors cannot commit expenditure on behalf of the Council and therefore are not able to ask staff for petty cash. If the Mayor wishes to make a donation, the procedure is for an email to be sent to the office asking for a cheque to be raised. Cllr Peter Freeman asked for an update on the Mayor's budget. The Clerk will prepare this.

Action: Acting Town Clerk

It was also agreed that a petty cash policy be produced and reviewed at the next meeting.

Action: Acting Town Clerk

10. To consider the external audit report

The Clerk informed members that an unqualified report had been received for 2018/19. However, a number of items were noted including minutes references, approval dates, timing of internal audit

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and terms of reference for sub committees. It was agreed that terms of reference would be created by each sub Committee.

Action: Refer to sub committee

The Chair and members wished to record their thanks to the Acting Town Clerk/RFO for the work undertaken in relation to the audit.

11. Consideration of a report prepared by Cllr Michael Theodoulou relating to the presentation from the Auditor General for Wales

The report had been circulated to members with the agenda and it was noted that there are a number of items that need to be addressed. It was noted that audit processes are becoming more stringent. It was agreed that an internal audit process/procedure be put in place.

Action: Acting Town Clerk

Reserves were discussed and it was again noted that a policy should be in place which takes into account the work specific to the Town Council.

Action: Acting Town Clerk

A review of bank balances was discussed and it was noted that consideration needs to be given as to when the loan should be drawn and the amount in each stage.

It was noted that the Council will be undertaking major projects in the near future and the need for project planning software/expertise was discussed.

12. To consider priorities for the Finance, Governance and Personnel Committee following discussion at the Chairs Committee meeting

Priorities had been discussed in the above items. However, it was noted that a staff appraisal system needs to be place by end of March 2020. It was agreed that the Clerk would prepare the necessary documentation to be reviewed by this Committee at the December meeting.

Action: Acting Town Clerk – December meeting agenda

13. To consider a review of Standing Orders

Standing Orders were discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk would obtain Standing Orders from One Voice Wales, NALC and Carmarthenshire County Council to compare to the existing Town Council's and prepare a review for the January meeting.

Action: Acting Town Clerk – January meeting agenda

14. To consider any referred matters from the other Committees

A number of referrals were discussed.

Firstly, a referral from Facilities meeting of 2nd October regarding permission to purchase coin operated door systems for the station toilets from reserves. It was discussed that the cost of installation of coin operated toilets will affect the Council's decision on an asset transfer of the Station toilets. It was noted that they need complete refurbishment. It was agreed to refer this item back to the Facilities and Assets Committee for detailed costings and project plan.

Action: Refer back to Facilities and Assets Committee