

MINUTES of the **Policy Committee** Meeting held on Thursday 13 February 2020 at 6.30 p.m. in Court 2, Shire Hall, Bodmin.

PRESENT: Chairman, Councillor J A Bassett, presiding; together with Councillors E M Ahearn, T M Barbery, J P Cooper (arrived 6.38 p.m. and from item POL/2020/003), D A Henderson, J R Gibbs (arrived 6.38 p.m. and from item POL/2020/003), S H Kinsman, P L G Skea.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Martin (Deputy Chief Executive (DCE)), Mr D Bidgway (Executive Assistant (EA)) and Mrs B Briggs (Senior Admin Assistant (SAA)).

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES:

The Chairman commented that she had circulated a spreadsheet listing all current BTC policies to Members in advance of the meeting. She noted that the policies highlighted yellow were the ones being reviewed at this meeting and those highlighted in orange would bring all policies up to date in terms of review dates.

Apologies had been received from Councillor P Brown.

		Action	Date
POL/2020/001	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>		
POL/2020/002	<p>PUBLIC REPRESENTATION SESSION</p> <p>There were no members of the public present.</p>		
POL/2020/003	<p>To consider and, if approved, adopt the Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting held on 5 December 2019</p> <p>A copy of the minutes was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that, on Page 1 of the Policy Committee meeting minutes from the meeting held on 5 September 2019, it had been recorded that the memorial regulations would be brought back to a future meeting. She commented that it did not state which meeting this would be and she wished to note the need to bring this document back to committee.</p> <p>Councillors J P Cooper and J R Gibbs arrived at 6.38 p.m.</p> <p>The Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting held on 5 December 2019 were approved and passed for signing.</p>		
POL/2020/004	<p>Gifts & Hospitality – Deputy Chief Executive to report on the Register of Gifts and Hospitality for Councillors and Staff</p> <p>Councillor D A Henderson reported that she had attended the opening of the new Hearing Centre at Specsavers in Bodmin in her capacity as Chair of the Promotions Committee.</p> <p>As part of this event, Councillor Henderson had been offered a free hearing test and sight test, for which she was not aware of the estimated values. The sight test had highlighted a change in</p>		

	<p>Councillor Henderson's prescription and Specsavers had also offered her a complimentary new pair of glasses. She reported that she had not yet selected her new glasses so was not currently aware of the value of this gift.</p> <p>The DCE noted that he wished to check the Gifts & Hospitality Policy and whether BTC had adopted its own policy or whether it had taken into account the code of conduct under the Localism Act 2011. He noted that Officers would review previous meeting minutes to establish when the policy had been adopted and how it had been created.</p>		
POL/2020/005	<p>Aims and Objectives – to consider and, if appropriate, agree, a shortlist of BTC objectives for 2020-2023 (minute refs POL/2019/050 and FSPM/2020/008(b) refer</p> <p>There was some confusion amongst Members as to the latest set of aims and objectives to be agreed.</p> <p>The Senior Admin Assistant (SAA) advised that the most recent version had been agreed to recommend at the FS&PM Committee meeting (Budgets) on 2 January 2020 (minutes ref FSPM/2020/008(b) refers) and that she had circulated a copy of this minute with the agenda. Councillor J P Cooper queried the set of objectives he had provided in tabular form at that meeting. The SAA advised that these were reflected in written form in the circulated minute.</p> <p>There was concern from Members that these objectives had not been adequately costed and therefore it was felt that adoption of these objectives should be deferred until the RFO had been able to provide these costings.</p> <p>It was noted that the minutes of the FS&PM Committee meeting (Budgets) held on 2 January 2020 had been to Full Council on 16 January 2020 (minute ref C/2020/012 refers) and that the action relating to the aims and objectives had been approved. However, some Members felt that, having only received a copy of the FS&PM Committee meeting (Budgets) minutes on the night of the Full Council meeting they had not had time to adequately review them.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND deferring agreement of the aims and objectives until the Members had received costings from the RFO.</p>	DCE / RFO	
POL/2020/006	<p>Business Continuity Plan – to review document and to consider any necessary amendments as appropriate (minute refs POL/2019/023 and POL/2019/037 refer)</p> <p>Members considered that this document could not be effectively updated without them having had the opportunity to review the findings from the desktop exercise which was conducted to test the current version of the Plan, and which was not available at the present meeting.</p>		

	<p>The Chairman enquired as to whether it would be necessary to revisit the previously agreed expenditure for the project. The DCE clarified that the initial project had been agreed at £1,500.00 and that, once the project had reached this limit, a report would be brought back to committee to consider additional expenditure based on what has been achieved to date and what further work BTC wished Health & Safety Associates to undertake.</p> <p>The DCE reported that Health & Safety Associates had provided a report on the Parks Compound and that there were some significant issues raised.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that BTC needed to consider financial prioritisation of the most pressing issues which the report recommended addressing and felt that it may need to consider closing the current building and moving the team into a fit for purpose building. He suggested that if a function of the team is considered not safe, it should be stopped immediately until made safe even if this would lead to a reduction in services provided by the Parks Team.</p> <p>It was noted that the Works Compound project was a current BTC key objective but that it had been postponed due to the prioritisation of other projects and capacity issues in delivering all objectives. Members considered that, had they understood the severity of the issues relating to the Parks Compound, they may have been minded not to postpone it but acknowledged that the postponement was due to the decision by Members to consider and explore different options in terms of relocating the team, refurbishing/rebuilding the existing compound etc. and that the decision had been made to postpone in order to protect the precept.</p> <p>Councillor J P Cooper considered that the committee should recommend the costing of an alternative building. He felt it was imperative to source a building within BTC's budget and make arrangements to relocate the team as soon as possible. He suggested that, in the meantime, anything identified by Health & Safety Associates identified as too dangerous be stopped immediately, with the Team's remit being limited to what tasks can be carried out safely.</p> <p>The Chairman enquired as to the Welfare Unit the Council had previously agreed to purchase (minute ref C/2020/016(b)(ii) refers).</p> <p>The DCE confirmed that this unit had not yet been purchased. He suggested that Charterwood be instructed to source a suitable new site for the Parks Team.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND that the DCE instruct Charterwood to investigate a new site for the Parks Department building and compound.</p> <p>The DCE noted that he would circulate a copy of Health & Safety Associates report to all Members.</p>	<p>DCE</p> <p>DCE</p>	
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	<p>There then followed a discussion about COSHH sheets. Mr Bidgway indicated that he understood there to be sheets in place for the Parks Team. It was noted that this would be checked.</p> <p>It was also noted that this matter should be escalated on the risk register and be considered at the next meeting of the Risk Management Working Party.</p>	<p>DB / DCE</p> <p>DCE</p>	
POL/2020/008	<p>Email and Internet Security, to include:</p> <p>a) Email and Internet Policy – to review document and to consider proposed amendments and any further necessary amendments as appropriate</p> <p>Copies of the current policy and guidelines were circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Councillor S H Kinsman enquired as to how the electronic device guidelines had been produced. The SAA explained that this document had been produced in line with the existing devices held by members but that, due to information pending from Microtest and the impending change of devices, this revised document had not yet been agreed.</p> <p>The EA advised that he was arranging a meeting with Microtest in order to review security in relation to the new Councillor devices.</p> <p>Councillor J P Cooper commented that he felt it prudent for all Members to move forward with laptops. He was aware that some Members' tablets were now so out of date, they had been advised by Microtest that updates were no longer possible. He felt that all Members should receive a new laptop and training, and that a robust policy be put in place going forward. Members considered that this policy would be much more straightforward and robust should all Members be working from the same, Council issued devices.</p> <p>Councillor J P Cooper then raised the subject of the EA having previous experience of working in IT and considered that he might be able to offer in-house IT support to Members and that he might also be prepared to take on the role of Data Protection Officer (DPO).</p> <p>Members felt that it was not appropriate to make any such requests of the EA during this meeting and that a meeting should be arranged to discuss these matters with him.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND that the DCE arrange a meeting with the EA to discuss the possibility of in-house IT support and the possibility of him taking on the DPO role.</p> <p>The DCE commented that he felt there was a role developing in terms of health and safety which would be ongoing and considered that an IT component could be added to this role. He noted that this was a matter for Council to consider in future.</p> <p>The Email and Internet Policy was then reviewed as follows:</p>	<p>DCE</p>	

	<p>Page 1, Item 3, Policy statement – it was AGREED to RECOMMEND adding wording to the end of the paragraph reading <i>‘and access on Bodmin Town Council Devices only’</i>.</p> <p>Page 1, Item 4.3, Email – it was AGREED to RECOMMEND amending <i>‘must not unlawfully forward confidential information’</i> to include the amendment and deletion of information, to read:</p> <p><i>‘must not unlawfully forward, amend or delete confidential information’</i></p> <p>Page 2, Item 5.1 Disclaimer – The disclaimer was considered too lengthy by some Members. The Chairman advised that, having been agreed within the last six months, this wording would need revisiting at a later date.</p> <p>Page 3, Item 8, Password Protection – It was AGREED to RECOMMEND changing the requirement to change passwords <i>‘regularly’</i> to <i>‘every 90 days’</i> to bring into line with current system requirement.</p> <p>Page 4, Item 11, Adherence to Policy – In order that the reporting of a breach be a more robust process, it was AGREED to RECOMMEND amending paragraph 1 to read: to report any breach of the guidelines to any two of the following: the Town Clerk, the Mayor, the Data Protection Officer (DPO) and the Chair of the Policy Committee.</p> <p>Members considered that the active steps to be taken and who would be responsible for taking them, as referred to in the second paragraph of item 11, were not clear.</p> <p>Page 4, Item 12, Queries – Members considered that this paragraph should refer to job roles rather than individuals, and that these should align with those referred to under Item 11.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND amending this paragraph to read:</p> <p><i>“Any employee with queries regarding the application of this policy should contact the Data Protection Officer, the Town Clerk, the Mayor or the Chair of the Policy Committee.”</i></p> <p>The EA advised that he was aware of Cornwall Councillors who were able to use their own devices and that they used SharePoint to access shared information.</p> <p>Members considered that it might be prudent to review Cornwall Council’s policy and amend it accordingly to fit the requirements of BTC.</p> <p>It was AGREED that the Appendix to the Policy, the Electronic Device Guidelines, not be approved and that they be revisited in light of a review of Cornwall Council’s guidelines and the implementation of Members’ new devices.</p>	<p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p>	
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	<p>The DCE commented that he felt it would be helpful to include a flow chart as an Appendix to this Procedure.</p> <p>Page 5, Item 4.2, Stage 2: The Second Capability Review – Members discussed how the review process should be measured. It was noted that a template should be created. Members also considered that a template should be created for a formal warning letter.</p> <p>Page 6, Item 4.3, Stage 3: The Final Capability Review – Under the fourth paragraph it was AGREED to RECOMMEND change the order of the wording to bring alternatives to dismissal before termination of employment as follows:</p> <p><i>“...inform the employee of any alternatives to dismissal, or that their employment is terminated, on the grounds of capability.”</i></p> <p>Page 7, Item 6, Other Considerations – Members considered that, in the case of the Town Clerk, the procedure should involve more than one person.</p> <p>It was noted that the Staffing Panel which had recently been convened was a Sub-Committee of the FS&PM Committee and could be utilised for this purpose in future. It was noted that the Staffing Panel had its own set of ToRs and that any panel required under Item 6 could be populated from the Staffing Panel.</p> <p>It was also noted that the new Policy and Resources Committee would have a new set of ToRs and that this procedure could be built into those.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND including the wording <i>“a panel of three Members, as convened by the Chair of the FS&PM Committee to include themselves and two members of the Staffing Panel (Sub-Committee of the Finance, Staffing & Performance Management Committee)”</i>.</p> <p>The DCE commented that the Terms of Reference for the FS&P Committee would require review.</p> <p>With regards to dismissal, Members queried who would have the authority to dismiss staff. The DCE responded that this would depend on the role. He noted that, under the new committee structure, the manager (Senior Officer) responsible for each committee would have the authority to dismiss staff reporting to them. Any appeal would come back to the panel as recommended above.</p> <p>Page 8, Item 7, Alternative Formats – It was noted that this email address be amended as recommended above, to the policy@bodmin.gov.uk email address.</p> <p>Footer – it was noted that the wording to reflect that this document had been agreed with Unison should be removed, as that would not be the case with this updated version. Members considered that</p>	SAA	
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	<p>RECOMMEND adding a bullet point to read: <i>“The job evaluation score for the role”</i>.</p> <p>Page 1, Item 3, Advertisement – Members considered that all vacancies should be advertised internally in the first instance. It was AGREED to RECOMMEND adding a new item 3.1 with the following wording:</p> <p><i>“All vacancies will be advertised internally in the first instance”</i>.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND deleting item 3.3, moving the wording relating to circulation of the advertisement into the new item 3.1.</p> <p>Page 2, Item 4.2, Recruitment Procedure – Members felt that, in line with the matrix scoring system used to score candidates, the word <i>“matching”</i> should be changed to <i>“scoring”</i>.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND amending the wording of the last sentence to read: <i>“The shortlisting and interviews will be based upon scoring a candidate’s skills...”</i></p> <p>Page 2, Item 4.3, Recruitment Procedure – Members felt that this was an unnecessary use of staff time and the applicants not submitting their application on time should be aware from the deadline that their application would not be considered.</p> <p>Page 2, Item 4.7, Recruitment Procedure – Under the first bullet point, Members considered that, as a Staffing Panel had now been formed as a Sub-Committee of the FS&PM Committee, members of this panel should form the interview panel for senior members. It was also considered that the Mayor should form part of the panel for the recruitment of senior officers and the policy should therefore include the Mayor, as Ex Officio.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND that the wording of the first bullet point be amended to read:</p> <p><i>“For the post of Town Clerk and other senior posts, up to three Council Members from the Staffing Panel (Sub-Committee of the Finance, Staffing & Performance Management Committee), to include the Mayor as Ex Officio, will form the interview panel”</i>.</p> <p>Under the second bullet point, Members considered that, under the new staff structure, the Clerk of each Committee would be responsible for the recruitment of members of their team, and that the Chair of that Committee should also be involved in the process.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND that the wording of the second bullet point be amended to read:</p> <p><i>“For all other positions, recruitment will be the responsibility of the Committee Clerk and Committee Chair once approval to recruit has been sought from the FS&PM Committee or Full Council.”</i></p>	<p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p> <p>SAA</p>	
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	<p>Page 2, Item 4.8, Recruitment Procedure – Members considered this item in terms of adherence to diversity and equality, and felt that some rewording was required to ensure clarity that the only questions BTC would ask would pertain to intrinsic requirements of the job, any reasonable adjustments BTC could make in order to assist with interview attendance, and equal opportunity monitoring.</p> <p>It was AGREED to RECOMMEND that the wording of item 4.8 be amended to read:</p> <p>Applicants will not be asked about health or disability before a conditional job offer is made; however, an applicant may be asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questions necessary to ascertain if an applicant can perform an intrinsic part of the job; ▪ Questions to establish if an applicant needs any reasonable adjustments to be made in order for them to attend/participate in an interview; ▪ Positive action to enable the Town Council to improve the diversity of applicants; ▪ Questions pertaining to equal opportunities monitoring. <p>Page 3, Item 6.1, Recruitment Procedure – Members enquired as to whether the inclusion of an equal opportunities monitoring form was being adhered to. The SAA advised that this was included at the end of the application document.</p> <p>Page 3, Item 7.1, Alternative Formats – it was noted that, as previously discussed, the email address would be amended to policy@bodmin.gov.uk.</p> <p>It was noted that, going forward, every policy should include a cover sheet as its first page, rather than being held as a sperate document.</p>	SAA	
POL/2020/012	<p>Procurement Policy – to review document and to consider any necessary amendments as appropriate to bring policy in line with updated Environment Policy (minute ref POL/2019/054 refers)</p> <p>The DCE commented that this policy would require further work in light of the Climate Declaration and Environment Policy.</p> <p>It was AGREED to defer this item to a future meeting.</p>	SAA	
POL/2020/013	<p>National Association of Local Councils Legal Topic Note (LTN) 22 – Disciplinary and Grievance Arrangements</p> <p>This LTN can be viewed online at: https://www.cornwallalc.org.uk/uploads/ltn-22-disciplinary-and-grievance-arrangements.pdf</p> <p>This document was noted.</p>		

POL/2020/014	<p>National Association of Local Councils Consultation PC13-19 – Strengthening Police Powers to Tackle Unauthorised Encampments (copy enclosed) – corporate response deadline of 17 February 2020 – to consider draft letter (minute ref POL/2019/051 refers) – DCE to report</p> <p>It was noted that Councillor J P Cooper had submitted comments and that anyone else wishing to comment should contact the DCE prior to the 17 February deadline.</p>		
POL/2020/015	<p>Risk Management Update</p> <p>It was noted that there was a typo under the ‘Control’ column and that the wording should be amended to read:</p> <p>“Members of the Parks Team have obtained the IOSH qualification.”</p> <p>Councillor J P Cooper proposed that an audit of COSHH documentation be added to the risk register. It was noted that this matter be taken to the next Risk Management Working Group meeting.</p>	SAA / AT	
POL/2020/016	<p>Any other urgent and relevant item, for information, that the Chairman considers appropriate</p> <p>There being no further items for discussion, the meeting closed at 9.18 p.m.</p>		