

**MINUTES** of the **Policy and Resources Committee** Meeting held on Thursday 25 February 2021 at 6:30 pm. via ZOOM conference call.

**PRESENT:** Chairman, Councillor P T Cooper, presiding; together with Councillors E M Ahearn (arrived 19:06), T M Barbery, J A Bassett, P Brown, J P Cooper, D A Henderson, K J Phillips and J Gibbs (arrived 18:35)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr P Martin (Town Clerk), Mr C Harris (CSM/RFO), Mrs N Davis (Senior Administration Assistant), David Bidgway (Executive Officer)

**Item 1**

**PR/2021/012 - Apologies for absence and Chairman's Announcements.**

Cllr Ahearn will be late due to work commitments. Cllr A Kerridge.

**Item 2**

**Declarations of Interest relating to items on the agenda.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Item 3**

**Correspondence received.**

None

**Item 4**

**PR/2021/013 - Public Participation Session** - An opportunity for residents to make representations or ask questions relating to items on this agenda. (Note: a maximum of 15 minutes will be allocated for this session and there will be a time constraint of 5 minutes per speaker);

There was one member of the public present who didn't wish to speak.

**Item 5**

**PR/2021/014 - Minutes of the previous meeting.**

Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

It was RESOLVED to confirm the accuracy of the minutes of 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

KP left the meeting at 18:39

**Item 6**

**Matters arising from the minutes**

P&R/2020/082	An update was requested for how many phones were required and how many were active for next P&R. Town Clerk nominated D Bidgway to investigate.  <b>Update</b> Initial requirement is that the roles of TC, RFO and EM need mobile phones, and then the estates operatives will require them. A user/role audit was requested and the phones to be added to the asset register.	<b>TC/D Bidgway</b>
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	Further investigation is required to look at whether the phones are fit for purpose to run applications like workwallet and the contract(s) provide value for money.	
P&R/2020/082	First aid training was queried, if all attended, if not could refund be sort? <b>Update</b> 2 members of staff did not attend, for good reason. Sam L is making enquiries as to refund or carry over places to future training.	TC
P&R/2020/082	Office Smart prices were queried – could stationery suppliers be reviewed. <b>Update</b> JB requested that local supplier BW supplies be included in the cost comparison. It was <b>Resolved to Agree</b> to delegate authority for Dave Bidgway to agree purchases from the supplier offering best value.	TC/D Bidgway
P&R/2020/082	Sharps bin renewal - Higher Bore St toilets queried – let them know it is not open. <b>Update</b> The sharps bin is missing from the toilets and needs replacement.  It was RESOLVED to AGREE to delegate authority to the EM to organise replacement.	TC
P&R/2020/082	Charge for vaccination queried. <b>Update</b> Deferred to next meeting	TC
P&R/2020/082	Portaloos – RFO to confirm they have been returned. <b>Update</b> The RFO confirmed that the portaloos were returned in September.	RFO
PR/2021/007	Aged Debtors - to make contact and take action of payment plans then to small claims <b>Update</b> Once the organisation resume trading (post Covid lockdown), the RFO will consider proposing an appropriate repayment schedule, based on their income forecast.  It was further proposed not to allow the organisation to return.  It was RESOLVED to AGREE to delegate authority to the RFO to produce a repayment schedule and progress negotiations on this basis.	RFO

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PR/2021/010b	<p>It was RESOLVED to record attendance and display on the website, with delegated authority to the officers to decide what was appropriate within the guidelines.</p> <p><b>Update</b> A request to upload member attendance spreadsheet on to website as soon as possible</p>	TC
P&R/2021/014	<p>It was asked that as Officers now have the autonomy to recruit staff if council could be provided with a definitive list of the staffing situation to ensure that all gaps are covered, updated organisation chart and costings of old and new structure</p> <p><b>Update</b> Discussed at Full Council.</p>	TC
P&R/2021/015	<p>The committee wished TC to refer the Jail issue back to the Solicitor referencing the Heads of Terms re car park signs.</p> <p><b>Update</b> Solicitor has written to Mallino regarding signage. Cllr Ahearn has evidence that the signage that has been erected contrary to the terms of the lease. Furthermore, there are no speedbumps and there is a risk of accident. Further discussion was deferred to confidential section of the meeting.</p>	TC

Item 12 was brought up the agenda

<p><b>Item 12</b>(moved up the agenda)</p> <p><b>PR/2021/016</b></p>	<p><b>To consider Risk Management matters:</b></p> <p>There was debate about the roles and responsibilities of the TC and RFO</p> <p>Internal Control Audit – summary of findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting records – maintained and free from material errors</li> <li>• Financial Regulations – these have been out of date for 4-5 years and needs addressing</li> <li>• Payments – Spending decisions can be traced in the minutes and purchase order are used. There was a problem with the Sept 2020 payments but that has been resolved. Procurement (proactive) and Purchasing (reactive) are distinct processes. The new process is not established enough to make any conclusions.</li> <li>• VAT claims are correct and up to date.</li> <li>• Risk Register – there is a working party but this is primarily focussed on identified risks in projects and assets and there needs to be a process to consider</li> </ul>		
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	<p>risks to the business, to include identification of the business process and internal control mechanisms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurance is ok – fidelity guarantee comes in under £5m.</li> <li>• Investment strategy – needs adjustment to reflect standard business practice around recording of long-term assets on the balance sheet.</li> <li>• Budgets – properly approved at Full Council following robust process. All committees were involved.</li> <li>• Budget monitoring – there was nothing in place until November. System established to report, highlighting variances to each committee is based on best practise.</li> <li>• Precept – systems were tested and precept was set in accordance to what was agreed at Full Council.</li> <li>• Income will be subject to another review as current (pandemic) conditions has seen income drop to abnormal levels.</li> <li>• Payroll – Green Book NJC have been properly implemented</li> <li>• New starters, new contracts have not been viewed and will be subject to year-end testing.</li> <li>• Re-gradings and progression have been applied correctly.</li> <li>• BACS reconciliations are correct.</li> <li>• End of year declarations were correct.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outstanding issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset (under £6k) register needs more work to list all internal and external assets, and to agree a valuing procedure, as council is still vulnerable. List of identified assets need further work. Write-off / disposal procedures are not clear, and needs to be addressed. Reference to the AGAR process will inform the development of this process. The asset register will be completed in 2 months time.</li> </ul> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED to AGREE</b> that departmental heads would produce an audit of assets within their departments and to delegate authority to RFO to consider and agree asset write-offs identified as appropriate within a PID, with full oversight of the TC. P&amp;R to consider PID process to make this amendment.</p>		
<p><b>Item 7 PR/2021/017</b></p>	<p><b>To consider and agree, if appropriate, the proposed Opening of the High Street Safely Fund bid</b></p> <p>Cornwall CC was inviting bids up to £10k. Consideration was given to a short term post to liaise between high street businesses, BTC and the Chamber of Commerce, primarily to</p>		

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Date			
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	<p>establish a safe trading environment, especially helpful around the establishment of a market in the town. An estimate of signage and sanitisation stations would be less than £2k. Any bid would have to be funded up front by BTC if agreed. Any post would be subject to usual terms and conditions of employment, including sickness and holiday accrual.</p> <p>In conclusion it was felt that the nature of this bid was too late into the pandemic to be received with credibility within the town.</p> <p>It was Resolved to Agree not to support this bid and it was withdrawn.</p>		
<b>Item 8 PR/2021/018</b>	<p><b>Schedule of Meetings 2021</b></p> <p>The May rotation had been reworked to reflect the fact that local government elections had been announced.</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED to AGREE</b> the amended schedule of meetings.</p>		
<b>Item 9 PR/2021/019</b>	<p><b>To consider and agree budget matters including Financial Comparison to end of December.</b></p> <p>To be used to detect trends and direction of travel. The delay in producing it is due to staffing vacancies.</p> <p>P&amp;R Income from hirings and lettings is down.</p> <p>Expenditure General Administration – Budget is £347,878 Actual expenditure to December 2020 £327,195 Commitment of £5302 Total - £332497 Balance - £15381 96% of the budget is spent to the end of December. Further spending needs close monitoring. The overspend is due mainly to contractors.</p> <p>JC – reiterated the desperate need for refurbishing the mayoral chain. RFO will allocate reserves to get this done. Fatterini are specialists in this work. Officers are to obtain an estimate for this work.</p>		
<b>Item 10 PR/2021/020</b>	<p><b>To consider the Schedule of Payments for December 2020, January 2021 and February 2021.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>December 2020</b></li> </ul>		

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	<p>Submitted for approval as previous submission was incorrectly headed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>January 2021</b> PB – query on preparation of graves. Council has previously spent a lot of money on equipment to do this and yet still using sub-contractors.</li> <li>• <b>February 2021</b> BOC rental charge, when did the council last buy gas? It would be cheaper to stop renting and to get sub-contractors in if required in the future.</li> </ul> <p>Proposed to return the gas bottles back to BOC and end the contract. It was <b>RESOLVED to AGREE</b> to terminate the BOC contract.</p> <p>DH proposed a system be created to monitor and control issuing uniforms and PPE. It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to delegate authority to the TC to investigate further and to develop a policy is to be submitted for consideration by committee.</p> <p>MB raised the issue of potentially shredding waste and make it available to members of the public but was informed the council would need a waste transfer notice and have a system to ensure no waste was inappropriately disposed of.</p> <p>Some items of expenditure did not have a corresponding purchase order and further investigation is required, although payments should be made in the mean time. There is also a requirement for departmental heads to inform staff that purchase orders must be obtained before any purchase or invoices will not be paid. If suppliers have been informed of this then council is entitled to withhold payment.</p> <p>There were concerns raised about the price paid for some items as they were higher than expected and this should be investigated further.</p> <p>It was <b>RESOLVED to AGREE</b> the Schedules of Payments for December 2020, January 2021 and February 2021. Noting that and items appearing on future schedules without a corresponding purchase order would not be paid.</p>		
<p><b>Item 11</b> <b>PR/2021/021</b></p>	<p><b>To consider Health &amp; Safety Matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car Park Accident – related to ice. Details have been forwarded to the council's insurers.</li> </ul>		

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<b>PR/2021/022</b>	<b>To consider Risk Management matters</b> This item was moved up the agenda and discussed earlier.		
<b>Item 13 PR/2021/023</b>	<b>To consider procurement management issues</b> The system has been tested with a purchase by the Museum and the internal auditor considered it quick and efficient.		
<b>PR/2021/024</b>	<b>Date of next meeting.</b> 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2021		
	To resolve to exclude members of the public and press as matters to be discussed were of a confidential nature (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 2/1  20.39 David Bidgway left the meeting		

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