

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 JUNE 2021

PRESENT

- The Mayor – Councillor Rushton
- Deputy Mayor – Councillor Garvey
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Hall
- Councillor Harper
- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Hawley
- Councillor Jackson
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Salt
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Yates

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

a) Disclosable pecuniary interests and dispensations

Councillor Brady declared an interest in the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone and Citizens Advice.

Councillor Harper declared an interest in Biddulph Valley Way and Lifeline.

Councillor Hart declared an interest in Biddulph Valley Way.

Councillor Hawley declared an interest in Christ Church Community Hub; his wife is a member.

Councillor Jackson declared an interest in the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone, in relation to activities undertaken with Biddulph Local People's Project.

Councillor Salt declared an interest in the Biddulph Royal British Legion.

Councillor Sheldon declared an interest in any matter relating to Biddulph in Bloom.

Councillor Yates declared an interest in Biddulph Valley Way.

b) Other interests

No other interests were declared.

23. APOLOGIES

Councillor McLoughlin.

24. POLICIES

a) To consider and approve revised policies

- i. Annual Leave and Special Leave Policy**
- ii. Carers Policy**
- iii. Community Engagement Statement**
- iv. Equal Opportunities Policy**
- v. Induction, Training and Development Policy**
- vi. Lone Working Policy**
- vii. Pay Policy**
- viii. Sickness Absence and Well-being Policy**

Councillor Garvey queried if the carry-over limit in section 3.5 of the Annual Leave and Special Leave Policy would be changed in light of Covid restrictions. The Chief Officer said that the policy would not change, but exceptional circumstances are taken in to consideration, and this occurred at the end of the last financial year.

Councillor Hawley requested that the review date on the Annual Leave and Special Leave policy be corrected to 2023.

Councillor Harper said that the annual leave notice of 14 days was a bit ambiguous.

Councillor Harper also asked if the term 'relatives' included step or foster children. The Chief Officer confirmed that any child within the employee's care is included in the term 'relative', and that annual leave would not be unreasonably withheld.

Councillor Salt noted that the Equal Opportunities impact assessment in the Equal Opportunities Policy makes reference to committees that don't exist any more. These would be amended.

Councillor Hawley asked if 'same-sex partner' need to specified separately, as 'partner' should now routinely be understood to include a same-sex partner. The Chief Officer said she was happy to remove this reference.

Councillors voted to approve the policies considered.

b) To consider and approve new policies

I. Financial Transactions Policy

Councillor Hawley thanked staff for such a detailed document and recommend it is included in the staff 'how-to' guides. Councillor Hawley moved and Councillor Perkin seconded. Councillors voted to accept the policy.

II. Health and Safety at Work Policy (please note, this is a living document and may change as roles, legislation and guidance evolves)

Councillor Salt said that more emphasis should be placed on the duties of Councillors to manage health and safety. Councillor Perkin felt this was covered under statements made in section 3.1. Councillor Yates suggested that section 3.1 references '*Councillors and volunteers working on behalf of the Council*'

Councillor Harper said that there should be a total prohibition of any person using a ladder by themselves.

Councillor Hawley queried if Staffordshire Moorlands District Council policies for the Town Hall had been used. The Chief Officer said that she had not had sight of the policy from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. The Chief Officer aimed to ensure that this was a detailed document, providing important guidance for staff.

Councillor Hawley said that the Health and Safety Officer to review this document, to ensure he was happy with it. Councillor Yates echoed this sentiment and asked that this be signed off by the Health and Safety Officer.

Councillor Garvey suggested some minor grammatical amendments to ensure clarity.

Councillor Perkin moved to accept the Policy, subject to consultation with the Health and Safety Officer; Councillor Yates seconded. All voted in favour.

III. Public Communication and Social Media Policy

Councillor Hawley questioned the legislation regarding the prohibition of the use of local authority resources to try to persuade people to hold a particular viewpoint. He wondered how this would be impact advertising the Neighbourhood Plan referendum. There was a discussion about the council's role in advertising and promoting the referendum. The Chief Officer would consider re-wording this section to note that the Town Council was a 'Local Council', not a 'Local Authority'; this had been included in the document to identify good practice.

Councillor Perkin proposed to approve the document. Councillor Yates seconded. Councillors voted in favour to accept the Policy, with one abstention from Councillor Hart.

IV. Co-option Policy

Councillor Jackson suggested a minor amendment in wording.

Councillor Salt suggested that the pronouns s/he be replaced with 'they'.

Councillor Hawley moved to accept the Policy and Councillor Salt seconded. Councillors voted in favour to approve the Co-option Policy.

Councillor Yates moved to recommend that processes be set in motion to advertise the Councillor vacancy in the Biddulph South Ward under the Co-option Policy; Councillor Perkin seconded. Councillors voted in favour of this motion.

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

25. GRANTS

- a) To consider and approve the grant evaluation report (to be sent by email). Please note the Grants Policy is attached, for reference.**

It was agreed to accept the report.

- b) To consider and approve a request for a grant extension from 2020-21**

It was agreed to approve the grant extension request.

- c) To consider and approve grant applications for 2021-22**

Grant awards were approved, subject to receipt of satisfactory, current and independently verified accounts by the Chief Officer.

- d) To approve that any unspent funds will be allocation in Autumn 2021.**

It was agreed the unallocated grant budget will be considered for allocation in Autumn 2021, as will any additional funds not awarded if satisfactory accounts are not received.

The meeting ended at 7.33pm.

Signed..... Date.....