

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the Policy Sub-Committee of Bingham Town Council
held on Friday 09 October 2020 at 3.00pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: J Stockwood, A Shelton, M Stockwood F Purdue-Horan, T Wallace and R Bird.

Also: Councillors J Lewis and W Stapleton

Officers: J Riddle (Deputy Clerk)

1. **CHAIR**

Councillor F Purdue-Horan was elected as Chair.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

4. **VICE CHAIR**

Councillor J Stockwood was elected as Vice Chair.

5. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The terms of reference were accepted by the sub-committee.

6. **MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

The meeting arrangements were considered by the sub-committee. It was agreed to

RECOMMEND a new policy that confirms:

Before all meetings

- a. The chair of the meeting is consulted on the agenda 14 calendar days before the meeting
- b. An agenda agreed by the chair is not subsequently altered without further agreement by the chair
- c. The proper officer must implement 15)b) xv) of the Council's Standing Orders "*refer a planning application received by the Council to the Chairman or in his absence Vice-Chairman (if there is one) of the Planning Committee within two working days of receipt to facilitate an extraordinary meeting if the nature of a planning application requires consideration before the next ordinary meeting of Planning Committee*"

During full council meetings

- a. Mayor's Announcements will no longer appear on the agenda. The Mayor will distribute any announcements by email to councillors and report on the civic duties they have performed during the Annual Town Meeting

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- b. Councillor reports will no longer appear on the council agenda. Councillors will report on their work as representatives on outside bodies to the relevant committee or sub-committee
- c. Borough and County councillor reports will no longer appear on the council agenda. Rushcliffe Borough Council and Nottinghamshire County Council provide regular email subscription services and social media updates regarding their activities
- d. Consultations will not appear on the council agenda. Consultations will be emailed to all councillors and added to the website as they are received
- e. Written representations from members of the public for agenda items are correspondence.
- f. Correspondence will be reported to the relevant committee or sub-committee or addressed according to the complaint procedure

After all meetings

- a. Draft minutes of the meeting must be provided to all councillors within 14 calendar days of the meeting

7. UPDATES TO STAFF HANDBOOK

The sub-committee were updated that policies such as the whistleblowing, time-keeping, adverse weather and traffic disruption, use of medicines and prescription drugs, driving and use of council vehicles, reporting sickness absence, annual leave, time off in lieu (TOIL), reserve forces, flexible working and paternity leave don't clearly address how to proceed when the issue involves the Clerk. Additionally, procedures are slow to implement when each procedural action requires another committee meeting and/or another council meeting before action is taken.

There are also typographical errors with missing/incorrect words or punctuation. It was agreed to

RECOMMEND that Council

1. To provide clearer policies for all employees and in recognition of the duty of care to implement procedures without undue delay.
 - a. In the staff handbook procedures that refer to 'the Clerk' or 'the Town Clerk' and the procedure applies to the Clerk, then the Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources committee are authorised to implement the relevant procedure action.
 - b. In the staff handbook procedures that refer to 'the Council' and the procedure applies to the Clerk, the Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources committee are authorised to implement the relevant procedure action.
 - c. In the staff handbook procedures that refer to 'the Mayor', then the Mayor may delegate to the Chair or Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources committee to implement the relevant procedure action.
 - d. In the staff handbook procedures that refer to 'the issue to the Policy and Resources Committee', then the Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources committee are authorised to implement the relevant procedure action.
 - e. In the staff handbook procedures that refer to 'a Councillor', then the Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources committee are authorised to appoint and authorise the councillor to implement the relevant procedure action.

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- f. In the staff handbook procedures that refer to 'a panel of three', then the Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources committee are authorised to appoint and authorise the panel of three councillors to implement the relevant procedure action.
2. The Mayor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Policy and Resources committee are authorised to update the Staff Handbook to correct minor errors in the text and issue the updated staff handbook to staff.

8. **POLICIES FOR THE LOCAL COUNCILS AWARDS SCHEME**

The sub-committee considered the policies that would require updating to allow the Council to work towards the Foundation Award of the Local Councils Award Scheme.

It was agreed to

RECOMMEND the following objectives must be completed to apply for a Foundation Award by March 2021:

- a. The publication scheme must be updated and implemented
- b. The complaint procedure must be updated
- c. The current priorities must be collated in an action plan for the current year
- d. The risk register must be updated
- e. The asset register must be updated
- f. Staff contracts must be updated
- g. Training records for all staff and councillors in the last year must be prepared
- h. The clerk must achieve 12 continuous professional development points in the year

As part of the work to update policies, the environmental policy must be complimented with a biodiversity policy.

9. **POLICY AND DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

The sub-committee noted that:

- a. Actions in risk register not completed e.g. facility inspection, appraisals
- b. Policies not being kept up-to-date (publication scheme, complaint procedure, risk register, asset register)
- c. Actions in three-year reserves forecast (projects) not being implemented e.g. CCTV update, car park project, open space security improvements, installation of snake, linear park bridge surveys, linear park steps, old court house alarm, old court building survey, induction loop facilities

It was considered that a locum clerk to complete specific objectives would help support the implementation of the council's policies and decisions.

Meeting Closed at 3:57pm