

CLEVEDON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN
THE COUNCIL OFFICES, 44 OLD STREET, ON WEDNESDAY 25TH AUGUST 2010
AT 7.30 PM.

Present: Councillor C Francis-Pester Committee Chairman
Councillor C Blades, B. Garner, C Hall, Mrs L Little, J Middleton, T Morgan,
J. Norton-Sealey, D Shopland, G Watkins, & C Wring
Town Clerk – Ms P. Heath,
Guest – Mr J Flannigan North Somerset Council

FGP 10/64 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Cotton (family commitments).

FGP 10/65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda.

FGP 10/66 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Finance & General Policy Committee meetings held on 30th June 2010 and ratified by Council on 11th August 2010 were accepted.

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| PART 1 |
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FGP 10/67 REVIEW PROPOSED CHANGES TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Financial Regulations, which were circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Financial Regulations as circulated with the following adjustments:-

6.5 (a) to read, "A record of each expenditure against the petty cash, shall be numbered and recorded in the Council's accounts system and accessible on demand to all Councillors."

6.5 (b) to read, "No more than a £250 cheque for cash may be drawn at any one time."

FGP 10/68 REVIEW AND AGREE INTERNAL AUDIT PROCEDURES

Members reviewed in full and discussed the Internal Audit Procedures, which were circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Internal Audit Procedures as circulated

Proposed by Cllr Garner, seconded by Cllr Shopland that the documents on agenda items 10 – 12 be accepted without discussion this was defeated by 6 votes to 5 with the Chairman's casting vote.

FGP 10/69 REVIEW AND AGREE FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Financial Risk Assessments, which were circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Financial Risk Assessments as circulated with the following adjustments:-

Banking & Investment arrangements & controls – last bullet point in internal to read "Town Clerk/RFO has mandate to deal with day to day management of the accounts but NO authority to transfer between or remove funds from the accounts"
First bullet point in external remove the words (Nat West) and insert "be"

FGP 10/70 REVIEW AND AGREE THE FOLLOWING RISK ASSESSMENTS

10/70.1 LONE WORKER

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Risk Assessment, which was circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Lone worker Risk Assessment as circulated

Members decided that the installation of a panic button connected to the alarm system should be investigated

ACTION TOWN CLERK

FGP 10/71 REVIEW AND AGREE THE FOLLOWING POLICIES*

10/71.1 GRIEVANCE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Grievance Procedure & Policy, which were circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Grievance Procedure & Policy as circulated.

10/71.2 DISCIPLINE POLICY & PROCEDURE

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Discipline Procedure & Policy, which were circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Discipline Procedure & Policy as circulated.

10/71.3 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Health & Safety Policy, which were circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Health & Safety Policy as circulated.

10/71.4 DIGNITY AT WORK – BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Dignity at Work Policy, which were circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Dignity at Work Policy as circulated.

10/71.5 RACE EQUALITY POLICY

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Race Equality Policy, which were circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Race Equality Policy as circulated.

10/71.6 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Disability Discrimination Policy, which was circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Disability Discrimination Policy as circulated

10/71.7 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy, which was circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Equal Opportunities Policy as circulated

10/71.8 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Child Protection Policy, which was circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Child Protection Policy as circulated

10/71.9 WORK RELATED STRESS POLICY

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the Work Related Stress Policy, which was circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the Work Related Stress Policy as circulated with the following adjustments:- amendment to line 1 to include the words "...Town and Parish Councils..."

10/71.10 I.T. POLICY

Members reviewed and discussed the copy of the I.T. Policy, which was circulated to all members with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council adopt the I T Policy as circulated with the following adjustments:-

10/71.11 COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURES

As the procedures had not been circulated this item was deferred

FGP 10/72 REPORT ON REVIEW OF STAFFING, AND REVIEW OF COMMITTEE CLERKS JOB DESCRIPTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND TO AGREE RECOMMENDATIONS.

Cllr T Morgan declared a personal interest in this item and took no part in the discussion or decision

Members discussed the report, which had been circulated with the agenda. Proposed, Seconded and RECOMMENDED that the Council agree the amendment to the Job Description for Administration Assistant & Committee Clerk re-titled Deputy Town Clerk as circulated.

Proposed Seconded and RECOMMENDED that the Council agree the reports recommendation 1 & 2 in that 1) Mrs Johnson's knowledge and experience developed over the last 18 years is recognised, 2) Mrs Johnson position is re-titled Deputy Town Clerk

"reports recommendation 3 That Mrs Johnson's spine code is increased to be comparable to the role April 2011/2012 by 2 spine points to 22, April 2012/2013 by 3 spine points to 25, April 2013 onwards by 1 spine per year to 29 being top band of LC2 below substantive benchmark. (Town Clerk currently on the top band of LC3 below substantive benchmark)"

An amendment to the above recommendation was proposed by Cllr Shopland

Proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** That Mrs Johnson's spine point be increased by 2 to 22 as from this meeting, and that all future reviews be conducted with the annual assessment.

The additional funding would be taken from reserves

PART 2

FGP 10/58 TO RECEIVE AND DISCUSS THE CURRENT FINANCIAL STATEMENT AND BUDGET SHEETS

A copy of the financial spreadsheet was circulated with the agenda. A comment was made on the cost of the legal fees in respect of the lease between the town Council and North Somerset Council; the Committee Chairman responded and said the matter of compensation from North Somerset was still being discussed but the majority of the additional fees were due to Clevedon Town Council's discussions.

FGP 10/59 GRANT REQUEST TIME LINE

Members agreed the grants time line as circulated.

FGP 10/60 RECEIVE THE ANNUAL RETURN THE EXTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT.

Members received the signed copy of the Annual Return and noted that it was displayed on the Council notice boards for public comment. A copy of the External Auditors report had been circulated with the agenda. The External Auditor raised 3 points 1 for action and 2 for information.

Action Point – the Council must review annually its system of Internal Audit and Control – Members noted that the internal audit review was to be discussed later on the agenda {this was a part 1 item minute no FGP 10/67, 10/68, 10/69}

For Information – Vat discrepancy on the balance forward as explained to Council during last years audit and had been explained in detail to the external auditor last year and during this year's audit.

For information – Internal Auditors report, it is requested by the External Auditor that the Internal Auditor sends a written report to the Council; the Internal Auditor has been made aware of this request.

FGP 10/61 DISCUSS WITH NSC RE OPEN SPACE CONTRACT AND MAKE RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Proposed, seconded and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to enable Mr J Flannigan of North Somerset Council to address the meeting and take part in the following discussion.

Mr Flannigan explained that North Somerset Council would be going out to tender for the green spaces maintenance contract in 2011 for the contract to commence in 2012. As part of the process of writing the tender document the officers from NSC are talking to the Town Councils about their involvement or requirements concerning the green spaces, giving the Town Councils an opportunity to consider taking responsibility of some or all of the public open spaces maintained under the contract. The final tender document must be signed off by NSC in June 2011 to allow the tendering and contract negotiations to be completed prior to the contract start date in February 2012, therefore a decision by the Town Councils as to the level, or not, of involvement is required by March 2011. Once a decision is made by the Town Council as to the inclusion, or not, and the level of inclusion it would not be feasible to change that decision until the end of the contract or a mutually agreed breakpoint. NSC is currently mapping all the areas to be included in the contract giving a more accurate and detailed picture than was available when the contract was first issued.

Members questioned the officer on the contract details and the following points were made.

- The current contract for Clevedon not counting officer time and services cost i.e. electric, rates was £250,000 per year. Of this about £189,000 is for the contract the balance being tree works and repairs.
- The contract includes grass cutting, some bin emptying, some litter picking it does not include any capital work to assets, nor any highway or drainage work, it does not include dog bins. It does include a small part of work on un-adopted areas, which NSC maintains by default. It does not include public toilets.

- The current contract allows for different maintenance standards on the open space dependant on their use and designation.
- The current contract states grass is cut when areas are between 15mm - 35mm high, the new contract could change that to 20mm – 75mm dependant on designation of the area.
- The new contract will be of a lower standard & specification of maintenance and therefore is expected to be cheaper
- The new contract is expected to be for 10 years with suitable break clauses.
- The new contract may follow the sectors preferred option of being a resourced base contract (simply the contractor is told the area of land to be maintained, the minimum level, the budget available and he specifies what he can do within that criteria over and above the minimum level)
- Clevedon Town Council could request and pay for a greater specification if required as part of the new contract.
- It would not be possible to employ a separate contractor to carry out the enhanced section of the work.
- Clevedon Town Council could take complete responsibility for some or all of the open space and either issue their own contract or piggyback on NSC contract.
- There may be opportunity for NSC to pay a set sum to Clevedon Town Council to cover part of the piggyback or independent contract.
- There would be a possibility, subject to NSC ratification, of the title of the land being transferred with the responsibility.
- The income from Salthouse Field would be transferred along with the responsibility, last year this was approximately £17,000. The maintenance and grass cut came to £20,000 last year.
- The Bowls Club is on a fixed lease with a peppercorn rent, the Concessions are on a fixed term contract these would be transferred along with the responsibility for future negotiations along the title.
- Salthouse Fields does not form part of the special expenses.
- If the Town Council took, on responsibility and funding for some of the areas at a specific maintenance level NSC may or may not be able to fund the other areas to be maintained at that level depending on cost and budget agreements following the government announced cuts.
- In respect of Strode Road playing field, members were concerned about the phosphorus wanted to know if an indemnity exists with the title?
- The work undertaken by volunteers in the town, which is over and above the contract, would be encouraged to continue.
- Concern was expressed that areas of Clevedon suffered earlier in the year as contractors were concentrating on Nailsea and Portishead for the “in Bloom” competitions and therefore not cutting grass in Clevedon – Mr Flanagan would investigate this.
- The Town Council would need to include all areas it took responsibility for in its public liability insurance.
- The current contract does have the ability to be extended but is not the preferred option of NSC as the cost savings need to be made sooner rather than later.

Information required and requested by members before the next FGP meeting.

- What is involved in the contracts and the percentage of the cost relating to those items?
- What is covered by Special Expenses in relation to green spaces?

- What type of lease is held by the Bowling Club, how long is it for, and what work is carried out by NSC on the site?
- What are the details of the concession, what is their duration, what if any work is undertaken by NSC on those areas covered by the concessions?
- What additional bills are paid on green spaces e.g Rates, electricity, and water?
- What were the repair/maintenance bills outside of the contract?
- What indemnity or conditions are on the title of Strode Road Playing field in respect of the phosphorus?
- What will be the minimum standard required by NSC either from the contractor or from the Town Council, would there be a difference?
- What would be the shortfall between the minimum required and current specification and what would it cost?

FGP 10/62 CHAIRMAN ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

There were no Chairman’s items for information

The Town Clerk advised members that the new model standing orders by NALC had been produced and would be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

FGP 10/63 TO DETERMINE PART I AND PART II ITEMS

It was agreed that agenda items 8 Financial Regulations, Agenda item 9 Internal Audit Procedures, Agenda item 10 Financial Risk Assessments, Agenda item 11 Risk Assessment, agenda item 12, .1-.10, and Agenda item 13 Staffing Report should be part 1 items requiring Council ratification.

The meeting finished at 9.26 pm

APPROVED AS A TRUE RECORD

CHAIRMAN Date