

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 19 AUGUST 2019 AT 5.00 PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, 28 FORE STREET, WELLINGTON

Present: Councillors A Govier (Acting Chair), V Stock-Williams, M Barr, J Thorne

Kathryn Hemensley (Town Clerk), Michaela Greener (Deputy Clerk)

1. Apologies

Cllrs J Lloyd, M Lithgow, N Smith.

2. IT Upgrade – Presentation by MTMIT, IT consultant.

Councillor Thorne declared a personal interest as a friend of Matt Mitchell the IT Consultant
Cllr Lloyd declared a personal interest as having previously used the company.

Matt gave a presentation setting out what services he had previously supplied to the Council, and his recommendations for upgrades and improvements still to be carried out.

Completed:-

- Provision of new PC
- Upgrade to Office 365 (which includes 'future-proofing')
- Improved IT security
- Restricted access to files where appropriate
- Ad hoc IT support

Further recommendations:-

(a) Email accounts – Cost £90 per month

- Hosting emails – this would enable software improvements such as 'out-of-office' notifications
- real-time synchronisation of email accounts across all devices (currently viewed individually on each device)
- vastly increased storage (current system is severely limited)
- Unrestricted number of mail boxes so Councillors could have bespoke WTC accounts without needing mails forwarded to their own personal mailboxes
- A more professional look to WTC communications.
- It support for all email issues

Matt was confident that this arrangement would suit the Council's needs and was happy to offer this on a 30-day trial. He advised that the Council owns its domain name *@wellingtontowncouncil* so can transfer this to a new email host-provider at any time.

(b) It Support – Cost £250 per month

Currently Matt provides services at an hourly rate of £50. He proposed to set up a contract whereby for a retainer of £250.00 per month he would provide unlimited, prioritised support on all IT needs, including devices.

Matt was amenable to offering a 6-month review to take stock of the services required over that period to ensure the contract represented good value-for-money.

(c) Website - between £2,800 and £4,500 one-off set up fee

It was accepted that the current website was no longer fully fit for purpose, and in any case would be terminated in March next year as the hosting platform was nearly obsolete. Staff currently have difficulty posting legally-required documents on the website, in addition to the Council wanting a more professional and user-friendly means for informing and engaging with residents.

Matt would build a new website based on the most popular currently-available platform 'Wordpress' It could range from basic to 'fancy' with features such as interactive calendars. The site could be linked to facebook and twitter, both of which were in critical need of an overhaul and re-launch.

The meeting was notified that looking at a new web-site was going to be a specialist area of work for MG, and Matt would be able to show a range of examples of what a new web-site could look like. He would also ensure documents loaded were in pdf format so they could not be altered in any way.

A new website would take around 2 months to complete.

Members of the group had not been able to provide competitive quotes as hoped from reaching out to other organisations.

(d) Projector and CCTV

It was agreed that for now these are 'nice-to-have' items rather than essentials and as such were deferred for the time being.

Councillors noted that Matt did not live in Wellington, however given previous difficulties with commissioning similar work locally on previous occasions, it was felt reasonable to consider further use of his consultancy services.

RECOMMENDED to accept the consultants' proposals for email hosting, IT support retainer and new website with the proviso of contract reviews at 6months/1 year then annually thereafter.

3. Update on Staffing issues

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from item 3(a) of the agenda.¹

(a) Confidential matters relating to the Clerk's employment were discussed, which would be recommended to the next full Council meeting.

(b) The Deputy Clerk advised her intention to become a permanent staff member, with a specialism in Events, Public Relations and Communications. This news was welcomed by the Councillors and the Clerk.

4. Accounting Processes

In response to the recommendation of the internal auditor it was agreed to work toward the purchase and use of a new accounting package such as 'Sage' or 'Quickbooks'. The Clerk

¹ Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Section 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations and Paragraphs 2, 3 and 7 of the Council's Access to Information Rules.

would investigate options and proceed once confident of having identified a user-friendly package which would facilitate the Council's accounting practices.

5. PR and Communications

It was noted that the Council currently funds a newpage on the 'Around Wellington' website which was set up to be populated by staff, but has not been used for many months. Also the Edge newsletter is funded by the Council, and it was understood from SALC to be good practice to issue at least one newsletter per year.

Cllrs highlighted the need for new communication methods to remain inclusive of those unable to make use of the internet and social media.

RESOLVED to develop a Communications strategy for approval by full Council. This would be cross-checked to legal requirements for the Council's publication scheme.

6. Longforth Road Public Conveniences

A brief verbal update explained that repairs had been ordered via the District Council's workforce, who in turn needed to call in TLS lock-specialists to review the door-entry system. It was anticipated that repairs would take some time.

7. Office Facilities

An ad hoc query was raised about the future of the District Council's Community Office which had again been closed due to staff shortages. There was still no clear indication as to the future plans of Somerset West and Taunton concerning this facility. It was agreed there was still a need to keep shared-facilities (such as a hub) as an active topic.

8. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting would be on **Monday 30 September at 5pm** in the Council Chamber

The meeting closed at 7.00 pm