

## WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

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

**Present:** Councillors J Lloyd, V Stock-Williams, M Barr, J Thorne, J Hunt

Kathryn Hemensley (Town Clerk),

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted by Cllrs M Lithgow, N Smith, A Govier.

#### **2. Council Offices**

##### **(a) Additional room.**

A report had been circulated by the Clerk in advance of the meeting. Since then the draft lease for the adjoining office had been received and would be passed to Amicus Solicitors for a legal check.

The initial project plan for the move was reviewed with approval to proceed. Any big-ticket items would need Committee approval prior to ordering.

##### **(b) Door Entry system**

The Clerk had met with an Asset Manager from Somerset West and Taunton to discuss the proposal to fit a door entry system to the office and the likelihood of this going ahead was now minimal. The proposed works had been as a result of a fire-safety inspection and had been intended to deter arsonists.

#### **3. Staffing**

**(a)** The Clerk's report on current staffing arrangements was noted and approved. Staffing levels were at 106 hours per week (including book-keeper and Community Warden), out of the 148 hours per week approved resourcing level - 4 X full-time equivalent. Further expansion would be dependent on having the additional office space, and review of Council priorities and activities for the year ahead. This would be considered further at the budget-setting meeting on 18 November.

**(b)** Councillors resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting to enable discussion of confidential staffing matters<sup>1</sup>.

#### **4. IT and Website**

Councillor Lloyd declared a personal interest in this item as she was a customer of the IT consultant.

Councillor Thorne declared a personal interest in this item as he was a friend of the IT consultant.

Noting the Clerk's report, Councillors agreed IT investment remained a priority, and that email hosting should be addressed first since the current operating arrangements caused inefficiency.

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<sup>1</sup> (The **Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings)** Act 1960 Sec 1 (2))

Councillors were asked to read and confirm approval the next day to the Clerk of the Consultant's proposed IT contract to enable the Mayor and Clerk to formally engage his services.

The Clerk advised that arrangements would be made in the new year to review available accountancy software with a view to further modernisation (and increased reporting capacity) of operating systems.

Risks around payroll and pension processing were discussed and the Clerk instructed to become fully conversant with all accounting operations.

The proposal for the staffing team (and Councillors if they wished) to meet with the IT Consultant on 6<sup>th</sup> November for a first review of a new website was approved. All Councillors had been invited to send written proposals to staff on what features and functionality they would like to see. Next steps would be to ask the Consultant to give a presentation on the first draft of the website. Functionality would need to include reporting on how many 'hits' the website was receiving.

## **5. PR and Communications**

In line with the Council's modernisation, it was agreed that new and different ways were needed to communicate and engage with residents. Councillors agreed that the money spent on current communications could be put to better use with alternative methods of PR and Comms. A particular aspiration was to have Council-related press releases each week in local media. Care would be needed however to remain inclusive of community members without access to online information, and Councillors wished to retain the annual 'Town Guide' as this was understood to be well-used.

**RECOMMENDED** to cease forthwith the two-monthly 'Edge' newsletter and the 'Around Wellington' Council webpage.

The Clerk would advise proprietors of the forthcoming discussion prior to the Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

## **6. Longforth Road Public Conveniences**

Further repairs had been cancelled during the week due to the only open toilet being blocked. Discussion around outright closure followed, noting that there had been no complaints received despite most cubicles being closed in recent months. A professional Option Appraisal was suggested to evaluate how best to deal with the premises. Given the significance of this public facility it was agreed further in-depth discussion was required.

**RECOMMENDED** to call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Council to review the short and long-term proposals for the public conveniences.

**RECOMMENDED** to complete repairs only to the cubicle where the arson attack took place so the insurance claim can be completed.

**The meeting closed at 7.50 pm**