

## WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD AT THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH HALL, WELLINGTON 21 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 4.00PM

**Present:** Councillors C Govier (Chair),  
M Barr, K Canham, A Govier, J Lloyd, M McGuffie, J Thorne and K Wheatley.

**In Attendance:** Councillor J Cole  
David Farrow – Town Clerk

One member of the press.

#### **496 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES AND APPROVE THE REASONS GIVEN**

No apologies had been received.

#### **497 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to approve and sign the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 12 December 2023.

#### **498 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor J Lloyd declared an interest in agenda item 5 (ii) as the Chair of Sampford Arundel Parish Council.

#### **499 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the public present.

#### **500 SOMERSET COUNCIL ASSETS AND SERVICES**

The Town Clerk updated the committee on discussions that were taking place in relation to the transfer of assets and services from Somerset Council.

- (i) Public Toilets - he confirmed that at its meeting the previous day, Somerset Council had resolved to close all public toilets in Somerset. On that basis, the Town Council would be picking up responsibility for the cleaning and management of the toilets in North Street Car Park and Wellington Park from 1 April 2024. He advised that at a meeting with Somerset Council officers the previous day he had been advised that the cleaning contract was tied in to the Street Cleaning contract that runs until January 2025 with an option to be extended for a further three years. Discussions were ongoing about whether the toilet cleaning element of the contract could be taken out of that arrangement.
- (ii) Park Security – Somerset Council had agreed the previous day to cease to fund this so the Town Council would cover the cost as agreed at its budget meeting on the 31 January. However, at the meeting the previous day Somerset Council Officers had advised that the company carrying out the locking and unlocking of the park had given notice that they would be ceasing to provide the service in Wellington from the beginning of March 2024. Somerset Council Officers would be looking to make alternative arrangements.
- (iii) CCTV – costs for continuing to run CCTV had been confirmed as £16,789 – the Council had allocated £25,000. A meeting was being arranged involving all Town

Clerks of towns where CCTV was operational to discuss the arrangements for the coming year.

- (iv) Planting – this was on the agenda for the Full Council meeting that was following this committee meeting.
- (v) Highways Steward role – whilst the Council had agreed that it would not sign up to the scheme as a whole, the Town Clerk was still trying to meet with staff from the County Highways Team to see how our Community Warden role could deliver some of those functions.

The Town Clerk also advised that the town clerks of the larger towns in Somerset had requested a meeting with the Chief Executive of Somerset Council and other senior officers to discuss how they could be better engaged with discussions about budget setting for 2025/6 so that the challenges faced in preparing for 2024/5 were not repeated. They will also be suggesting that rather than looking at transforming Somerset Council it should be looking at transforming the delivery of public services in Somerset through a range of agencies including town and parish councils.

Councillor Wheatley asked that given that we would be procuring more services in the future that consideration as given to how we could ensure that local providers were utilised and that we should promote that that is what we are doing. The Town Clerk would look at how that could be done.

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that should the Council be approached by parish councils to provide services, it should be receptive to such requests recognising that its priority had to be delivering services to Wellington

## **501 FUTURE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

A paper had been circulated with the agenda and was discussed. It was agreed that the paper presented a good starting point. Concerns were raised that the Policy and Finance and Environment Committees had too broad a scope. It was also felt that work needed to be done at the level below committees to establish what would be the most effective way of conducting business. The Town Clerk would work up some alternative models for further consideration.

## **502 STAFFING MATTERS**

- (i) Staff Appraisals – the Town Clerk reported that he had completed appraisals for all staff and that the outcomes were positive. He confirmed that training was considered as part of that process and that the training budget for 25/6 had been increased given the changes that were coming. He advised that his appraisal needed to be completed and it was agreed that Councillors Barr, Thorne and Wheatley would complete the process subject to the Clerk confirming that Standing Orders allowed that.
- (ii) Job Descriptions – **RESOLVED** to approve the job descriptions and grades for the roles of Open Spaces Manager, Projects Assistant and Receptionist.
- (iii) Staffing Review – **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that Local Council Consulting be approached to refresh the staffing review undertaken in 2022 in the context of the forthcoming changes to the Town Councils roles and responsibilities. Also that the role of Responsible Financial Officer be separated from the role of Town Clerk given the increasing size and scope of both roles.

**503 RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEME**

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the scheme be adopted.

**504 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Ful Council that the Statement be adopted.

**505 LONGFORTH ROAD TOILET BLOCK**

The Town Clerk updated councillors on the progress that was being made in relation to the demolition of the toilet block. A briefing note will be circulated after the meeting. It was hoped that work would start on demolition within a month.

**506 PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPING THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO COMMUNICATION**

**RESOLVED** to agree the purchase of Canva Pro software at a cost of £100pa and to begin publication of a newsletter.

**507 TONEWORKS TOURS**

**RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that no charges are made for tours of Toneworks but that donations would be welcomed.

**508 HMS WELLINGTON**

**RESOLVED** that in response to the communication from the HMS Wellington Trust Councillor Wheately would make contact and arrange to visit when he is in London.

**509 TO CONSIDER EXCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting, on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

Reason: taken from legislation - Information relating to a particular individual/s.

**510 STAFFING ISSUE**

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on a confidential staffing matter.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 5.55pm.

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**Councillor Catherine Govier**  
**Chairman**