

REPORT OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING 22nd JANUARY 2013

MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

Chairman: * Mrs L Sutherland

Councillors: * T Edwards
Mrs A Hayward
* Mrs M Jarrett
* R Khiroya
* Mrs V Lantree
* S Watkins
Mrs J White
* Mrs J Worrall

*Denotes members present

There were no members of the public present

RECOMMENDATION

1. HR PANEL REPORT

Cllr Worrall gave a verbal update on the work being carried out by the HR Panel. She advised that Cllr Boatman was working on a policy for Paternity leave, using examples from other authorities. Cllrs Mrs Preedy and Cllr Mrs Worrall had inspected the parish office and the War Memorial Hall, taking into account the H&S issues identified within previous reports, however nothing further had been done at this stage. The draft for Standing Order 15 was discussed and

the Committee

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL

That the draft Standing Order 15 be approved as per the report with the following amendment

9. Only persons with line management responsibilities shall have access and means of access to employee **personal** records.

This was proposed by Cllr Mrs Worrall, seconded by Cllr Mrs Jarrett and unanimously approved.

2. RISK ANALYSIS STRATEGY INCLUDING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF RESERVES

The Chairman advised that she had used the same format for the Risk Analysis as given in the Orange Book, She stated that the content was much the same as the financial risk statement put in the new format, but that two additional items had been added regarding Business Continuity. She felt that it would be necessary to dedicate one day per year to assimilate disaster recovery. She also advised that the Clerk had been tasked with producing a draft Business Continuity Plan to be put before a summer meeting of this Committee for approval. The IT contract would need to be looked at and an alternative building in which to house the council on the short term identified, with sufficient resources including telephone and internet connection.

The Chairman proposed acceptance of the Risk Analysis

The Committee
Unanimously RESOLVED
To adopt the document

Members then went on to look at the Risk Management Strategy. The Chairman advised that she had taken the content from the Orange Book, as recommended by the Auditors.

The Chairman proposed adoption of the Strategy
The Committee
Unanimously RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND
That the Council approve the Risk Management Strategy

Members finally considered the Risk Assessment of the Reserves. It was noted that the threshold for financial institutions compensation limit was £85,000. It was also noted that the majority of the reserves were invested in very low rate policies, only realising in the main 0.25% interest. Cllr Mrs Worrall outlined her proposal to use the reserves and consider staggering the investments in a financial institution to attain a better rate of interest.

The Committee
RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND
That the Council approve staggering investments into a financial institution to gain a better rate of interest.

This was proposed by the Chairman and unanimously approved.

3. PROPOSED PRECEPT 2013/14

The Clerk explained the changes in legislation regarding how the Tax Base was calculated and therefore how much each parishioner would have to pay. She advised that the tax base had increased by 1.07%. She also advised that Three Rivers District Council was to fund the shortfall of £7154 for this financial year.

Having taken all the details into account

The Committee
RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That the precept be set at £345,500 for the 2013/14 financial year, thus keeping the precept payment the same as the previous five years (£59.11 per band D Council Tax Payer)

4. ADDITIONAL HOURS AND OVERTIME

The Chairman advised that the office hours had been looked at all year. Evidence suggested that from a financial and employment point of view it would be acceptable to increase thereof the admin staffs hours by 5 hours per week. Any overtime would then be the exception, and would have to be authorised by the Council Chairman or Vice Chairman. The important point to be noted was that this could be done within budget causing no increase in the precept. The new committee reports identified staffing and financial implications and these would need to be taken into account when assessing new projected in the future. She felt that the committee should approve the recommendation.

Cllr Mrs Lantree did not agree as she could not reconcile the figures and whilst she could appreciate that there was a lot of interruptions in the office environment the Council should consider alternatives.

The Chairman responded by stating that the existing situation had been looked at over the past nine months but no-one had come up with another solution. The amount of hours shown on the report justified the proposal.

The Chairman proposed

That the Committee

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

The approval of increasing the hours of three Admin staff by 5 hours per week as detailed in the report

This was carried five in favour, one against and one abstention.

5. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The Committee

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That the Parish Council enters into negotiation with Three Rivers District Council to purchase South Lodge

12/49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs Hayward and Cllr Mrs White.

12/50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12/51 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting dated 20th November 2012 be approved as a true and correct record.

12/52 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising

12/53 FINANCIAL COMPARISON STATEMENT 2012/13

The Committee

RESOLVED

To note the report

12/54 HR PANEL REPORT – See Recommendation 1

**12/55 RISK ANALYSIS STRATEGY INCLUDING FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF RESERVES -
See Recommendation 2**

12/56 HUMAN RESOURCES AND H&S SAFETY CONTRACT

The committee

RESOLVED

To note the report

12/57 P&R BUDGET 2013/14

For the sake of continuity Members considered and approved agenda item 13 & 14 before considering the detail of this 2013/14 budget. The Chairman stated that whilst the budget had been increased in certain areas, which included a 43% increase in funding to the Village Halls Trust, the over all precept need not be increased for the parishioner.

The Committee

RESOLVED

To approve the 2013/14 budget

This vote was carried with six in favour and one against.

12/58 PROPOSED PRECEPT 2013/14 – See Recommendation 3

12/59 FOUR YEAR VISION

The Chairman gave an update on the Four Year Vision, starting at the top.

Grants & Funding – Cllr Mrs Jarrett advised that her contact at Dacorum was no longer employed there and therefore was unable to help. Cllr Mrs Boatman had been asked to look into any EU and local funding opportunities. The chairman agreed to email Cllr Mrs Boatman for an update, but she felt there was a lot of funding opportunities available to the Council but volunteers were needed to seek them out. Cllr Mrs Worrall stated there needed to be a communication process from each committee to rationalise what was needed in terms of funding, ie a projects list, and the rationale behind the project so that the Panel could target for funding, ie Children, environment, education etc

Cllr Khioya, and Cllr Mrs Worrall volunteered to be on the Panel, the Chairman advised she would contact Cllr Mrs Boatman, The target set would be for the fist Council meeting in June/July 2013

Property Register – Cllr Mrs White had agreed to take this project forward and an update would be asked for at Full Council.

Communication – the times lines were being updated after each committee minutes approval.

Training – the Chairman advised that staff training needs were being identified under the Appraisal system. However it was necessary to have a similar process for Councillors. Cllr Mrs Worrall stated that due to fact that there was only one year left, it may be better to leave this until the new council were elected. The Chairman stated that she thought it would be useful to ask what training Cllrs had attended, the effectiveness of the training and what training they would like to have received so that a process and budget could be put in place for next year. This was tasked to Committee Chairman to report back to P&R.

Appraisals – this had been dealt with by the Chairman Vice Chairman and Clerk.

The Chairman asked Cllr Mrs Lantree to update the Four Year Vision accordingly.

12/60 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee

RESOLVED

That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded for agenda item 13 and 14 and they are instructed to withdraw.

12/61 **ADDITIONAL HOURS AND OVERTIME** – See Recommendation 4

12/62 **OFFICE ACCOMMODATION** issued under separate cover

12/63 **CLOSURE**

The meeting having started at 8.00 pm, finished at 10.02 pm

These minutes have been checked by the Chairman.

Signature Via email Date.....23.1.13.....

These minutes were agreed as a true and correct record at the Policy & Resources meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Signature Date