

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 14 December 2015

Present: Cllrs P Aldis, T Cole, A M Hill (Chair), A Jackson, C Osborne, M Pettitt (Vice-Chair), and S Sutton

In attendance: Chris Robson (Town Clerk)

1 **Apologies for absence**

No apologies had been received.

2 **Declarations of interest**

- i) *Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - none*
- ii) *Non-disclosable Interests - none*

3 **Chairman's Items**

There were no Chairman's items.

4 **Date of Next Meeting: 21 March 2015**

5 **COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

It was proposed and agreed that in terms of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, proposed and agreed that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

6 **Opening Hours**

Members received a report with recommendations from the Town Clerk on amending the Town Council's reception opening hours.

An additional report from a Member was presented to the Committee. The report outlined a third recommendation.

The Chairman updated Members as to his discussions with the Town Clerk and office staff following the previous Human Resources Committee meeting. It was reported that following this meeting the Town Clerk had met with all office staff to review reception opening hours. The recommendations in the report were a result of those discussions and an overall review of the office administration by the Clerk.

The Town Clerk informed Members that he believed extending opening hours to 4pm on the days the office is currently open was a workable

Action

Sandy Town Council

change, with a view to potentially open a fourth day in the future.

A Member stated that he had concerns with the Town Clerks report and the recommendations within it. The Council must provide a first class service and be fully accessible to the public. The Member commented that a member of staff could act solely as a receptionist, dealing with calls and all visitors, which would stop interruptions to back office staff.

The Chair asked whether it was the intention that the former TIC staff would be employed as a receptionist. The Town Clerk stated this was never the intention of the previously agreed staffing restructure.

It was proposed that the Council reception opening hours be changed to; Monday 9am – 2pm, Tuesday 11am – 2pm, Wednesday 9am – 2pm, Thursday 9am – 2pm, Friday 9am – 2pm. The proposal was not seconded.

It was proposed and seconded that the Council reception opening hours be changed to; Monday 9am – 4pm, Wednesday 9am – 4pm, Friday 9am – 2pm.

Members went on to discuss the reports and commented as follows;

It had previously been agreed that the office would remain closed one day a week for training and staff meetings and that at the previous committee meeting it was indicated that Members wished to see later opening hours for the reception. The Town Clerks recommendation addresses these points with the option to extend to a fourth day in the future.

A Member agreed that the Council needed to offer the best possible service and aim to be as accessible as possible to the public, but that having the office reception closed for two days a week in the short term would allow for sufficient staff training to ensure a good service is provided.

It was noted that the intercom should be repaired so visitors can communicate with the office easier upon arrival. It is not unusual for Town Council offices to be closed during the week due to a great deal of work that happens behind the scenes.

That extending the current days opening hours until 4pm as an interim step would give more opportunity for the public to use the reception, with the option of adding a fourth day in the new year. That the hours be review following the annual meeting to assess if they are working.

Sandy Town Council

A Member noted that the public can still make appointments to attend on days the reception is closed.

A Member felt that neither of the proposals was suitable and as such the times should remain as they are until the office can open for four days a week.

It was proposed and seconded that the Town Clerks recommendation be amended to state opening hours will be reviewed at the next meeting of the committee and a user survey is undertaken to help assess opening hours.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that the office opening hours be changed to Monday 9am – 4pm, Wednesday 9am – 4pm, Friday 9am – 2pm. That the opening hours are reviewed at the next meeting of the Human Resources Committee and a user survey be carried out.

Town
Clerk

For: 5

Against: 2