

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 19 March 2018

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

In attendance: Chris Robson (Town Clerk)

Absent: Cllr M Pettitt

	<u>Action</u>
1 Apologies for absence (HR-44-2017/18) Apologies were received from Cllr M Pettitt.	
2 Declarations of interest (HR- 45- 2017/18) i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - none</i> ii) <i>Non-disclosable Interests - none</i>	
3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (HR- 46 -2017/18) RESOLVED to receive the minutes of a meeting of the HR Committee held on Monday 11 December 2017 and to confirm them as a correct record of proceedings.	Admin
4 Public Participation Session (HR- 47 -2017/18) No members of the public were present, and no questions had been received.	
5 Health and Safety/Accident Report (HR- 48 -2017/18) Members noted that there had been no accidents or safety concerns since the last meeting of the committee on 11 December 2017.	
6 Training (HR- 49 -2017/18) i) Members noted the Bedfordshire Association of Local Town and Parish Councils spring training courses and it was agreed that the schedule of training should be circulated to all Members. Any Member wishing to attend a course will be invited to let the office know. ii) Members received a training report from the Clerk and noted training undertaken and the Clerks completion of CilCA modules. The Chairman noted that the recent appraisal training was useful in helping to develop the Council's appraisal process. iii) Members received and reviewed a checklist for the next level of the Council award scheme and noted that the Council was already meeting many of the requirements for the silver level. There were still some sections which required further work but the Community Plan and consultation on the Plan would help the	

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Council achieve the remaining requirements.

It was noted that although the Council had a formal grant procedure it required a policy document to support this. The Clerk would draw up a policy for approval by the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee.

Town
Clerk

7 Managing Council Meetings (HR-50-2017/18)

Members received and considered a report from the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee on the management and scheduling of Council meetings. The Chairman explained that these ideas were meant as a talking point for Councillors. There has been some concern lately that the scheduling and level of meetings was resulting in long evenings for Councillors and members of staff, occasionally resulting in difficulties in eating evening meals before meetings. It was acknowledged that overall the meeting timetable worked well, but the committee needed to consider how it could tackle such issues.

The Chairman's report suggested that no Council meeting should start before 6:45pm and that going forward Development Scrutiny meetings should start at this time. The Clerk informed Members that development scrutiny had been moved to 6:30pm as there had been occasions when the meeting had overrun due to a heavy number of planning applications. It was commented that a 6:30pm start was resulting in 'dead time' between Development Scrutiny and the following meeting. A Member stated that it is the responsibility of Committee Chairman to have a meeting run to time and ensure matters are dealt with in the allotted time.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that meetings of the Development Scrutiny Committee shall begin at 6:45pm and no Committee or meeting of Council will start before 6:45pm.

A Member commented that when individuals become a Councillor they know there are regular meetings but may not understand that extra meetings can be added to the calendar. Individuals considering becoming a Councillor may not fully comprehend the commitment and number of meetings that may be involved. It was suggested that some information is pulled together to highlight the scheduling and number of meetings prospective Councillors may need to attend. This can be put with other information on the Council, such as the committee system and provided to individuals considering becoming a Councillor.

Town
Clerk

It was agreed that the Clerk would draft an information pack which could be sent out to prospective Councillors/candidates detailing the meetings and commitment involved in becoming a Councillor.

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Members discussed emails from the Clerk and whether Councillors should be encouraged to respond more. It was noted that there is a case for a response when a date is required, or a 'yes or no' answer. However, decisions cannot be made via email. A Member commented that there are some items, such as the recent bin consultation that could just be emailed out to Councillors for information. Another Member commented that it was important to have such things on an agenda as it does effect residents of the town. It was commented that it is down to the Chairman to move a meeting on and have Council note rather than discuss a topic if that is appropriate.

Members discussed scheduling of extra meetings or presentations. It was agreed that the Clerk should ensure that there is not more than one presentation to Council on any given night. Members expressed a preference for scheduling additional meetings on a Monday night but that all Councillors should be asked their preference when such a meeting arises. The Clerk should email all Members stating that a reply is required.

The Chairman referred to the provision of refreshments if the Council were to need to call a meeting which may be particularly long. Other organisations such as schools and CBC do this. Another Member said they would not support any proposal where expenditure was incurred on provision of refreshments.

8 Equalities Policy (HR-51-2017/18)

Members received and considered the Town Council's amended Equal Opportunities policy. It was commented that the additions included some valid points which did improve the policy. However, the language used within some sections of the policy didn't quite tie in and needed to be amended. The tense of the text needed to be changed to current, rather than future and must remain consistent throughout.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the amended policy be adopted by the Town Council subject to the suggested amendments to wording.

9 Chairman's Items (HR-52-2017/18)

The Chair reminded Members that the Clerks mid-year review was imminent and would be carried out in April.

10 Date of Next meeting: Monday 11 June 2018 (HR-53-2017/18)

11 COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION (HR-54-2017/18)

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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 will 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.

12 Staffing Matters (HR-55-2017/18)

- i) Members received a report on staff sickness levels for consideration. It was noted that some members of staff had zero or very low levels of sickness and that a letter should be sent to those employees acknowledging this. It was commented that if a Member of staff is unwell and it is contagious time off is important to ensure it doesn't pass to other members of staff and allows for a quicker recovery.
- ii) Members received and noted a staffing report from the Town Clerk.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendations in the Clerks Report.

Town Clerk

It was noted that the outdoor foreman was not as accessible as the Administration Team Leader as he was often out on site around the town. It was agreed to circulate the outdoor foreman's email address to Councillors for matters which required his attention.

Admin