

## HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

### GOVERNANCE AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE 26<sup>th</sup> November 2019

#### MINUTES OF MEETING

**Present:** The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Kath Hey, and Councillors Andrews, Stevens, Wilcox and Williams

**Also attending:** Steve Kerry Town Clerk

The Chair, Councillor Brian Wilcox reminded all present of the fire procedure and that the meeting is recorded.

#### **GP2019/20.58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were noted from Councillors Boulter, Dykes and Hunt.

#### **GP2019/20.59 SUBSTITUTIONS**

None

#### **GP2019/20.60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **GP2019/20.61 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by the Mayor and unanimously

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the minutes of the meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> October, and the confidential minutes of the same date, were agreed as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Chair.**

#### **GP2019/20.62 CAPABILITY PROCEDURE**

The Clerk reminded the Committee that this had been agreed in principle at the last meeting, subject to any comments from staff. One comment had been received which suggested that at the initial meeting, and at the review meeting(s) a staff member should be allowed to have a friend or colleague with them. The Clerk acknowledged that this suggestion was well-intentioned and had some merit but in his view could lead to the supervisor/manager also wanting a supporter and would formalise the process too much too early. Staff with responsibility for carrying out these kinds of meetings would be trained in handling difficult conversations, (Shropshire Council run an excellent one day course on this topic), and would be required to carry them out firmly but sensitively. The procedure did allow for a brief adjournment if anyone was becoming too stressed or emotional to take a full part in the meeting. On balance therefore the Clerk advised against accepting this suggested amendment.

After a brief discussion, including confirmation that at the more formal disciplinary stages staff would of course be entitled to a trade union representative or work colleague to assist them as stated in that procedure, it was unanimously agreed without a formal vote and

**RESOLVED**

**That the capability procedure as published be finally agreed without amendment.**

**GP2019/20.63 DIGNITY AT WORK PROCEDURE**

The Clerk reminded the Committee that this was in the same position as the previous item, agreed in principle pending any staff consultation outcomes. One comment had been received which was the suggested broadening of the description of the effects of bullying and harassment which he felt was a reasonable addition to the published document and he recommended members to accept the proposed change. The change was to add words to the second sentence of paragraph 2.3 which describes the potential harm from bullying and harassment.

After a brief discussion it was unanimously agreed without a formal vote and

**RESOLVED**

**That the dignity at work procedure be accepted with the suggested additional words in paragraph 2.3 “in addition, to individual emotional torment and the undermining of a positive atmosphere, corroding effective team working” being included.**

**GP2019/20.64 FREEDOM CEREMONY – ADDITIONAL FACILITIES**

The Clerk introduced the report and added that a quote had now been received for £450-00 for the video link. This had been for the Wedding Room, but it was now planned to use Committee Room Two, adjacent to the Council Chamber. This may be cheaper. In any case, the quote was within the range suggested in the report. The Clerk suggested members consider the balance of issues in the second section of the report as the crux of the matter, that a Freedom Ceremony should be done well as it is a rare and important occasion but that the Council must be mindful of the view that excessive spending on civic ceremonies may be inappropriate.

Members considered the importance of the ceremony and noted that the recipient of the honour is already, in accordance with previous policy decisions of the Council, paying for the guests who have been invited to a meal. The Council is providing suitable pre-dinner refreshments for all attendees. In this case the recipient is a well know local personality with a wide circle of friends and a large extended family, so the request for more visitor space was on the face of it a reasonable one.

It was unanimously agreed without a formal vote and

**RESOLVED**

**That the Committee authorises the Clerk to hire the Wedding Room (or Committee Room Two if preferred) and a video and sound link for guests at the forthcoming Freedom Ceremony and to commit the necessary expenditure to provide this facility.**

**GP2019.20/65 ANNUAL BLUE LIGHT SERVICE**

The Mayor introduced this report which had been written at her request. She acknowledged that the blue light services do an immense amount of hard work for the community and get little public recognition of that, certainly at the civic level. She

suggested a service which would be similar but not identical to the traditional Civic Service. The main difference was that it was hoped to invite front line staff to attend to represent their colleagues working on shift rather than a selectin of VIP senior officers. If there were any commendations or awards pending it would be an appropriate time for those to be presented by the leaders of any of the services represented. Public participation and statements of thanks from those who have received emergency help would also be included. It was acknowledged that time was short and with a key member of staff on sick leave as well as other pre-Christmas events and staff holidays looming, it might be necessary to move the date back to February. With this in mind, it was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Andrews and unanimously

**RESOLVED**

**That the Council works with the Mayor's Chaplain and Vicar of St Peter's Church to arrange a Blue Light Civic Service on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2020 or at another date in February as determined by the Mayor.**

**That at the next Committee meeting after the Service, the Committee reviews the first service, decides if any improvements can be made and whether to set the service into the civic calendar for 2021 and following years.**

**GP2019.20/66 ROBING PROTOCOL OF CIVIC CEREMONIES**

The Clerk reminded members of their recent decision to dispense with the practice of the Mayor and himself robing at Council meetings and for the Sword Bearer to be in civic dress as well. Some civic ceremonies took place in the context of a Council meeting, and the report had only referred to the Annual Meeting of the Council (Mayor Making). The purpose of this report was to clarify the dress code for civic apparel at other civic occasions which were part of a Council meeting.

At the same time, the report also set out in one statement the protocol for when the Deputy Mayor would wear red as opposed to the standard council member civic uniform.

Members noted that the report set out clear and simple guidelines which should be supported.

It was unanimously agreed without a formal vote and

**RESOLVED**

**That at the installation of the Junior Mayor, the Mayor, Clerk and Sword Bearer will be robed as will those Councillors attending and both the outgoing and incoming Junior Mayors.**

**That at freedom ceremonies the Mayor, Clerk and Sword Bearer will be robed, the full Liveried Team will be on duty and in uniform and Councillors attending will be robed.**

**That except when officiating on behalf of the Mayor at either of the above, the Deputy Mayor will be robed as a Councillor at civic ceremonies except for**

**Remembrance Day, Armistice Day and the Opening of Three Choirs in Hereford when they will be robed and badged as Deputy Mayor.**

**GP2019/20.67 ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Risk Management (non-financial) and analysis

Review of the Blue Light Civic Service

A training needs analysis following completion of the staff appraisals, such analysis to include possible councillor training needs

**GP2019/20.68 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 6 pm

The meeting closed at 6.23 pm

Signed .....

Date .....