

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

GOVERNANCE AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE 25th February 2020

MINUTES OF MEETING

Present: The Right Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Kath Hey (from 6-10 pm) and Councillors Wilcox, Stevens, Dykes, Andrews, Boulter and Williams (from 6-15 pm)

It was noted that traffic was especially bad, and some members had called into say they would be late.

In attendance: Steve Kerry Town Clerk

The Chair reiterated the fire procedure.

GP2019/20.79 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Councillors Powell and Williams (for lateness)

GP2019/20.80 SUBSTITUTIONS

None

GP2019/20.81 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

GP2019/20.82 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Andrews and unanimously

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of 28th January 2020 be accepted as an accurate record and signed accordingly by the Chair.

GP2019/20.83 TOURIST INFORMATION STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

The Clerk reported to the Committee that Ben Corbet had started as TIC Manager and had made an excellent start showing a great deal of energy in getting the facility ready to be open for 2nd March. This view was endorsed by those members who have seen the work done so far. Committee had resolved to consider staffing after the Manager was in post so he could input into the plans. As planned, the Receptionist had been spoken to about his role and his preference was to stay where he was and provide support and assistance to the new TIC staff, especially when the manager was absent. This would make the use of apprentices easier than if they were reporting to a more remote officer in the TIC Manager's absence.

The detailed report about apprenticeships had been worked up by the TIC Manager and the Clerk commented that he was impressed by the coverage and detail of the report and its clear presentation. This was also endorsed by members.

In discussion it was noted that the use of apprentices was not only cost effective but gave a real opportunity for local people to apply for a first job in the city serving their local community. It was suggested, and agreed, that contact be made with the appropriate Herefordshire Officer to make sure that care leavers aged around 18/19

and looking for a starter job were aware of this and specifically encouraged to apply. The Clerk will follow that up and make the necessary contacts. It was noted that apprentices are pensionable once their remuneration exceeds £7,000 pa, which it won't in the first year. The logic of having two-year apprenticeships in future in alternate years so one new starter would arrive and one continue into their second year every year was supported.

Members generally expressed their support for the new and innovative way of staffing the TIC and were pleased to hear that while this was going on volunteers were also being interviewed to add their contribution. Members did not wish to micro-manage the resolution of which apprenticeship provider would be used, there were several local providers of good standing who would be approached by officers.

It was proposed by Councillor Andrews, seconded by Councillor Dykes and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk and TIC Manager are authorised to complete discussions with one of the identified providers, plus Hoople, and enter into an agreement to offer two customer service apprenticeships to work in the TIC.

That once a provider is selected, the Town Clerk, TIC Manager and Chair of this Committee will conduct any necessary interviews or other selection processes to appoint the apprentices. (In the event of the Town Clerk or Committee Chair not being available the Deputy Town Clerk and Vice Chair may be appointed as substitutes.)

That the Receptionist is thanked for his offer to provide supervision in the absence of the TIC Manager to ensure the apprentices have ready access to support when required, and that the Receptionist's job description is amended accordingly and the post re-evaluated independently by Hoople.

That one one-year and one two-year apprenticeships are offered in 2020 and that in 2021 the one year offer is replaced by a second two year offer to enable one new starter and one continuing apprentice each year.

That the TIC Manager is authorised to conclude volunteer agreements using the HVOSS model to assist in recruiting volunteers to the TIC.

GP2019/20.84 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS OF THE EVENTS PROGRAMME

The Chair reminded members that this is in effect a referral from Community Development Committee which had agreed an ambitious new events programme but did not have within their remit the necessary powers to organise staffing arrangements to deliver that programme. The Clerk explained that when events was added to the Committees and Contracts Officer JD what had been envisaged was Historical Hereford Day and perhaps one more, smaller, event. The new programme was substantially greater than that, including the brand new Applefest in October and a series of events mainly in and around High Town in the Summer. As this was starting from scratch the workload implications were significant and as the officer

concerned was also responsible for backing up and covering the financial processing functions of the Council there was simply too much for one person to do.

The proposal was to allow for up to 18 hours on the existing Administration and Information Officer job description and grade, either by an increase in hours for an existing part-time member of staff or by an appointment of a new part-time employee. The arrangement was proposed for twelve months to allow the impact of the new events programme to be properly assessed, both in terms of what events would continue and also how that affected staffing pressures.

In discussion members expressed the view that as the Council was moving quite significantly from talking about things to actually doing things, and taking on significant new roles, it was to be expected that staffing hours would have to increase. It was reaffirmed that all internal part time staff will be able to apply for additional hours as well as offering external applicants the possibility of applying for a one year part-time role.

It was then proposed by Councillor Dykes, seconded by Councillor Boulter and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk is authorised to advertise a part-time post for 18 hours a week on the existing Administration and Information Officer job description and that this offer be open to both existing part-time staff wishing to increase their hours and external applicants.

That the post be offered on a twelve month fixed term contract.

That when the Community Development Committee evaluates the events programmes and determines its future, a further report is given to this Committee on ongoing staffing implications and appropriate decisions are made regarding alteration, continuation or termination of this arrangement.

GP2019/20.85 CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

The Clerk introduced the report and explained the current difficulty that if confidential business is recorded any member of staff ascribing minutes from the recording could have access to it. When the confidentiality was about an external party such as commercially confidential tender details that was not a problem as staff were under instructions regarding that sort of item. The difficulty arose when the recording was about them, or an issue with a member of staff they ought not have detailed information about. The options were to record separately or not to record confidential business at all and use traditional minute taking methods. It was noted that there is no legal obligation to record and the minutes are the legally admissible record once they are approved as accurate.

The Clerk also explained the attempt by a member in another parish to test the boundaries of confidential recordings in the light of the new regulations (2014) and the reason for a proposed change of wording in declarations of confidentiality.

In discussion members affirmed that they felt that there was merit in continuing to record confidential business but accepted that it should be separate from the main

recording. This would also mean members of the public could listen to the recording without any concern about them inadvertently gaining access to confidential business. What was needed was a simple solution that would not unduly disrupt a meeting but enable confidential recording.

It was then proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor Williams and unanimously

RESOLVED

That the declaration of confidential business will be modified to include reference to confidential recording under the 2014 regulations.

That confidential business will be recorded separately using a USB plugged into the laptop.

That the USB will be kept by the Town Clerk unless the confidential matter being discussed is about his employment etc in which case it will be kept by the Chair of the Committee. In both cases the storage will be securely locked.

GP2019/20.86 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

RESOLVED To exclude the press and public under the terms of the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960 s1(2) to enable a confidential matter to be discussed.

The recording of the meeting was stopped at this point.

GP2019/20.87 SUPPORT FOR HINTON COMMUNITY CENTRE AND APPOINTMENT OF A MEMBER OF STAFF

It was

RESOLVED To make a twelve month fixed term contract appointment of an additional member of staff.

The remainder of this minute is confidential.

GP2019/20.88 READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

At the conclusion of the above item it was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Stevens and unanimously

RESOLVED To re-admit the press and public for the remainder of the meeting.

GP2019/20.89 PROPOSED REVISION TO STANDING ORDERS

The Clerk reminded members of the difficulty created by a late amendment to the budget at the last meeting of Council which had required instant calculation to try and identify the effects on council tax and the budget. Many members had abstained because they did not have sufficient information to come to a view on the matter. The proposed changes to standing orders would only apply to material changes, that is those that would affect the overall expenditure budget, the council tax and precept requirement or the drawing from reserves. Minor alteration to

move funds from one area to another within the budget could still be taken as on the night amendments.

The proposed method would enable all members to discuss the budget and log concerns or amendments before the January council meeting. This would in turn enable the Clerk to prepare a brief report setting out the effects of any proposed amendments and this would support members in their decision making. It was reiterated that it was absolutely constitutional for a member to move an amendment as he had on this occasion and that the Mayor had been quite right to admit it and put it to the vote. Under the current Standing Orders there had been no other way to deal with the matter.

Without any further discussion it was unanimously

RESOLVED

That the Committee recommends the new Standing Order 9 (i) as listed above to Council subject to three members signing a motion to that effect.

That the Committee recommends the new Standing Order 4 (d) xii as listed above to Council subject to three members signing a motion to that effect.

GP2019/20.90 ITEMS FOR FURTHER MEETINGS

Training Needs Analysis for members and staff

Mental Health and wellbeing support arrangements and confidential contact facility for staff

Homeworking and remote access to services policy

Snow/flood policy

GP2019/20.91 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 5th May 2020 at 6 pm

Signed

Date