



NANTWICH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 21ST JANUARY 2021.

Present – Councillors: Peter Groves (Chair), Penny Butterill (Vice Chair), Carole Thomas, David Marren, Andrew Martin and John Statham with Samantha Roberts the Town Clerk.

Also present: Councillors Pam Kirkham, Arthur Moran, Stuart Bostock, David Greaves

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Phil Staley

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest expressed.

9. MINUTES OF POLICY COMMITTEE OF 15TH OCTOBER 2020

Committee approved the minutes of the Meeting held on 15th October 2020.

10. STAFF AND MEMBER TRAINING, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Members considered the previous circulated report and attached draft policy. Councillor Statham suggested the policy appeared to cover everything that is needed but asked if it would contradict or affect the HR policies and whether the draft policy would be enforceable. The Clerk advised that the only area of the draft policy that would be enforceable related to repaying costs associated with post entry qualifications. Councillor Statham asked if the policy would form part of the employee handbook, and the Clerk advised it would not, but she would share the draft policy with the HR advisors to ensure that the policy complimented the HR policies within the handbook.

Councillor Marren sought clarification on repaying costs for training if an employee left employment part way through a course or had a break in training for two years and then returned to complete the training and then left employment. The Clerk clarified that the employee would only repay what the council had already paid out during an existing course, and once two years had lapsed then the conditions of repaying fees would end, and the employee would only have to pay for the existing training.

Councillor Marren also asked about the understanding of equality of opportunity to training giving an example of two employees in different roles wishing to complete the same training. The Clerk advised it was more about the equality to access training, not equality to the same training. All training and development would be relevant to the demands of the business and the role of the employee. The Clerk agreed to amend the wording to reflect this understanding.

Resolved: It was resolved that members support recommending the draft policy for approval to full council subject to the minor amendments as detailed above.

11. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members considered the previously circulated report and attached draft policy. Councillor Marren expressed his concern with consulting through Facebook and twitter as there is not confirmation the account holder is a real person or resident of the town. The Clerk clarified that the policy relates to how the town council will use social media to share information with residents, direct communication with individual Facebook or twitter accounts would not be conducted in relation to consultation.

Councillor Bostock asked for clarification relating to the section of the policy on why the council would engage, particularly relating to "*involving residents in public services and making sure their knowledge, experience and priorities shape those services, so they are more responsive to need.*" Councillor Statham

in supporting Councillor Bostock suggested the wording needed amending. The Clerk confirmed that she would amend the wording, but the statement related to residents understanding what services the council deliver, and by communicating with residents the services can be improved or changed to fit the needs of the community.

Resolved: It was resolved:

- a) That members support recommending the draft policy for approval to full council subject to the minor amendments as detailed above;
- b) That the draft policy will be shared with full council once the Policy Committee has considered options for the introduction of a Petitions Policy.

12. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Bostock spoke to his motion, providing some background to the motion asking members to consider options to address the issues at Coronation Gardens. Councillor Bostock advised that he had been in communication with an officer from Cheshire East who has indicated his offer of support to address the issues.

Councillor Groves shared with members details of a recent press release relating to the Government introducing new powers to enable police to act on encampments on private and public land.

The Clerk provided members with options to consider, reminding members that all the options had financial implications that the council had not budgeted for in the new financial year. The options included considering community asset transfer of the land, making a financial contribution to erect fencing on the land, or merely seeking that Cheshire East take action to address the issues as landowners.

In response to the Clerks advice Councillor Bostock sought support from members to ask the Clerk to obtain further information on the possibility of a community asset transfer and details of possible costs of erecting fencing at the site. Following a discussion on the two requests it became apparent that most committee members would not support an asset transfer for Coronation Gardens. It was therefore agreed that the Clerk would seek details on potential costs associated with erecting fencing at Coronation Gardens and bring details to full council for further consideration once all the information is available.

Resolved: That the Clerk would obtain costs for erecting fencing at Coronation Gardens and bring back to a meeting of the full council to allow for an informed decision.

The meeting ended at 7.43pm

Signature of Chair :.....

Date :.....