



**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 25th JANUARY 2022
AT 7.45PM VIA VIRTUAL ACCESS**

Present:

Cllr I Blazeby (Chairman)
Cllr R Shaw
Cllr D Toinko
Cllr C Thompson
Cllr Hodges
Cllr A Snape
Cllr J Roberts

Also, Present:

Rob McGregor – Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Stephanie Stanley – Corporate Services Manager
Beverley Jones – Community Services Manager
Sally Auker-Phillips – Administration Officer

733. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

734. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None declared.
- (b) Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item – None declared.

735. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

736. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

737. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

There were no members questions.

738. MINUTES

- a. Members received and approved Minutes of the Corporate Services Committee meeting held on 21st December 2021 as a true record with one amendment to item 10b – Comms Forward Plan – add look at ways of reporting.

739. MATTERS ARISING

- a. Minutes of the Corporate Services Committee Meeting 21st December 2021.

Cllr Thompson raised a point from the last meeting in relation to Twitter and duplication of followers on other social media platforms and asked the CMM for any updates. CMM reported that although there was some duplication of followers on Twitter and Facebook there was value in continuing with the Twitter account. - see Item 10e.

740. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Delegation Policy Review

Members were asked to review the Scheme of Delegations and make recommendations to Council relating to a call-in process and opportunities to streamline elements of Committees to reduce administration and support for Officers.

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk if he had anything more to add on the Delegation Policy Review. The Town Clerk commented that he did not and that the detailed report included recommendations and some of the points raised at the Council meeting by Cllr Mackey.

Cllr Thompson had a few questions which she would raise with Officers separately but specifically commented on the comparisons between the Scheme of Delegation and the Committee Terms of Reference that had been circulated. She sought clarification on the delegated functions that were set out in the Delegation Policy:

- As to why the Council specifically pull-out Manor Park and Millennium Park and no other spaces that fall under Community Services, as well as lighting and Arts and Culture were not covered in the policy.
- The Policy also states that all community events are under the Community Services Committee and her concern was that the Civic responsibility had now been moved to the Functions and Events Co-Ordinator, but the budget for the Civic Events, including Recognition for Community Awards had been moved to Corporate. She concluded that if this were the case, it would need to be moved into the Delegation Scheme.
- In addition, as noted at the Council meeting, the Youth Panel currently does not sit anywhere in the Delegation Policy. As it required a lot of staff resources, she said it should be included in the Policy.

Cllr Snape commented on 3 things that related to planning, Business and Corporate Services and proposed looking at the distribution of tasks between the two latter committees:

- Planning -- to consider time spent on planning applications when we do not have any traction with CBC and possibly delegate the work to Officers, which would allow more time to consider strategic planning, for example the Neighbourhood Plan, which would deliver a more valuable outcome.
- Business Services- to become a meeting that focusses on the business of The Rufus Centre to generate a profit, so we can deliver a surplus every year from it.
- Corporate Services - overseeing the finance elements from Business Services, making Corporate Services a more finance and general-purpose Committee.

Cllr Roberts, agreed with Cllr Snape's comments about focusing on The Rufus Centre, as it was a key part of the Town Council's strategy. Regarding Planning and delegating to Officers, Officers should consider controversial cases that would require a Council decision. However, a lot of applications fell within permitted development which would

make it possible to delegate to Officers. Cllr Snape added that it would be a good opportunity for the Council to clarify their role in the community and the residents' expectations of the Council. Cllr Thompson commented that as the Business Services Committee were focusing on the Rufus Centre as a business, Barclays Bank should fall under the same remit.

Cllr Shaw raised a question following discussions at the Council Meeting, by mentioning the Terms of Reference, regarding the rights of non-Committee Members being able to vote. He wanted to clarify the legal position under the local Government Act. The Town clerk confirmed, as stated in the Report, that according to the Local Government Act, non-Committee Members do not have the right to vote nor attend exempt items at any Committee meeting.

It was noted that the Planning Terms of Reference had not been included in the document pack, which had been an admin error.

It was **recommended** that the Scheme of Delegation Policy Review be looked at with the addition of input from Committee Chairs', Councillors and the SMT, in order to ensure that there is an ability for the full Council to be involved in the debate of 'strategic' issues if they aren't referred by the standing Committee Chairs. Also, the whole Committee operation and responsibilities to be reviewed to see if it is possible to streamline their operation, in order to reduce the administrative burden on supporting Officers, without reducing necessary accountability. Proposals to be brought back to the next Corporate Service Committee Meeting in April 2022.

The Chairman proposed the next Corporate Services meeting be brought forward to March.

b. Residents Satisfaction Survey

The Chairman commented that the idea of the survey was to provide a benchmark on the aspects of residents' views of the services the Council provide and to track progress. He added that the two elements that qualify a survey were usage and awareness.

The CMM outlined the proposed timetable for the survey to allow time for analysis and outcomes to be presented at the Annual Assembly in April and included in the Annual Report. Timeline: February 21st Survey Open – March 20th Survey Closed.

Members discussed the draft survey circulated and various ideas/ aspects were mentioned:

1. To look at demographic information about the usage of the Town Council services.
2. Community value - a balanced look at involvement in events both commercial and community.
3. Obtain more information relating to usage for Barclays Bank & Frontage.
4. How the Council were doing against strategic aims.
5. Pose questions in a way to produce a quantifiable measurable answer.
6. Measure in different dimensions and themes (family events, comedy club) as outcomes will be different.
7. Priority ranking- provide a scale on how important it was that the Council provide the event and how well it was received to highlight any gaps.
8. Create a more 'young person friendly' survey with detailed dialog through the Youth Panel - to be used in schools and local youth groups.
9. Look at the routing and filtering of questions on Survey Monkey.

It was **resolved** that the Chairman would work in collaboration with the CMM to bring back the proposed questionnaire, looking to incorporate key points raised at the meeting, with the intention that the revised option is on the agenda for sign-off at the February Town Council Meeting.

c. Marketing Equipment

Members were asked to consider the revised options for marketing equipment as per discussions at the previous meeting.

It was **resolved** to purchase recording equipment option A (Google Pixel 6) at a cost of £650 and that video editing be undertaken on existing IT equipment. The functionality would then be reviewed at the next Council meeting.

d. Business Continuity Plan - Test

Members were asked to discuss testing the Council's Business Continuity Plan. This was highlighted as a priority at the previous meeting.

It was **resolved** to start the process of testing and reviewing the Council's Business Continuity Plan. Also, for the DTC to approach Cllr Badham, due to his previous work experience, to help with creating scenarios to test or potentially providing alternative contacts for who might be able to assist. The full process will need to decide who needs to be involved in the test, setting a date for testing, reviewing results and recommending plan improvements. It was agreed for the proposal on this to be considered at the next Corporate Services meeting in April.

741. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

a. Budget

Members were asked to note the Corporate Services budget circulated. Cllr Snape commented that the reason why the expenditure seemed high was because of Election costs and requested that the Civic costs and Election costs be separated out. It would then highlight how much money had been raised for charities.

Cllr Hodges commented about the PWLB loan and asked if it had been recorded under the Corporate Service Summary or elsewhere. The Town Clerk said that it had been recorded under Business Services and said details needed to be put more clearly in the Summary in the future.

Members also commented that under the Barclays Bank category the rent and interest should be shown on the same page, as then two streams are linked, and it was better accounting practice.

Action: CSM

b. Delivery Plan & Committee Priorities

i) Members were asked to note the Delivery Plan for Corporate Services.

The Chairman commented on page 1, item 2 (notes) of the plan, he said that it would be useful to have a timeline on software being trialled by the Communications & Marketing Team to know whether the council should renew the subscription. On page 2, item 10 (notes) he asked for the wording to read 'target date' and for the word 'aspiration' be removed, as there had been no subsequent delays.

Action CMM

ii) Members were asked to note the consolidated list of Committee priorities.

The Chairman noted that the Committee priorities document did not include/list the priorities from the Planning and the Personnel Committees which he thought was essential when looking at allocation of revenue, capital budget and staff resources. He suggested that the Committees be asked for their priorities at their next meeting.

c. **Marketing & Communications Plan 2021-22**

Members noted the Marketing & Communications Plan circulated.

Members commented that the proposal for the next Flitwick Papers Spring addition, due to Corporate Services being changed to quarterly, could not be reviewed in advance. The CMM said that the proposal plan could be circulated in advance to be reviewed by all the Committees for Members to input additional content prior to finalisation.

Action: CMM

d. **Marketing & Communications Forward Plan 2021-22**

Members noted the Marketing & Communications Forward Plan circulated.

e. **Social Media & Website Statistics**

Members noted the social media and website stats circulated including trend data.

Cllr Snape commented that it would be interesting to aggregate the engagement element on social media, to look at figures overall on a graph that could be included in a Report for the next Corporate Service meeting.

Action CMM

Cllr Thompson raised a point from the last meeting in relation to Twitter and duplication of social media followers across the social media platforms and asked the CMM for any updates. The CMM said Twitter had remained static and added that there was value in carrying on, but closely monitoring it for the time being. The Chairman asked that the findings be shown on a Report for the next Corporate Service meeting.

Action CMM

742. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were no members of the public.

743. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution was **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

12a) Local Organisation's proposal – for consideration

It was **recommended** to reject the local organisation's proposal for several reasons.

12b) Updates – for information

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolved** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Meeting ended at 21.28pm