



## **Finance, Operations and Personnel Committee Meeting**

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January at 7pm**

**Meeting held at Pye Green Community Centre, Bradbury Lane, Hednesford, WS12 4EP**

### **Present:**

Cllr Paul Jones (Chair)  
Cllr Laura Harrison  
Cllr Arthur Roden  
Cllr Ronald Turville  
Cllr Ann Turville  
Cllr Shelia Cartwright

### **In attendance from Hednesford Town Council:**

Lindsey Smith – Chief Officer  
Cheryl Kinsella – Finance Officer

### **Members of the Public:**

There were 4 members of the public present

#### **1. Apologies:**

Cllr D Cartwright  
Cllr A Pearson

#### **2. Declaration of Interest**

No declaration of interest was raised

#### **3. Previous Minutes**

Previous minutes from the FOP Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were agreed and approved

Proposed: Cllr A Turville

Second: Cllr R Turville

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

Abstain: Cllr L Harrison

#### **4. Public Participation**

Member of the public raised concerns about agenda item 7b. The member of public enquired if this is due to the Council's dissatisfaction with the Chief Officer and if it is that the Committee meeting was not the place to discuss the matter and the grievance procedure should be followed. The member of public enquired that if the Chief Officer needs to tell Council of the role and responsibilities of the Chief Officer and remind Council of Standing Orders and Code of Conduct for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in 6 months then is there an issue with the Officer and Councillor relationships. The member of public stated that both roles should be treated with respect and should work as a team before reading out national association guidance on the roles of each with Officers being there to advise, inform and guide Councillors as well as carrying out resolutions made by Council. The member of public did not have a question but did wish to state that it is uncommon to have such an item on the agenda and as a member of the public viewing the agenda that it was difficult not to make assumptions about the challenges that Officers were facing.

Cllr P Jones advised that the Committee will take on board what the member of public has said.

#### **5. Finance**

- a. RFO presented overall final summary of the 2024/2025 budget that has been called for by Hednesford Town Council from CCDC and advised that the precept value had been highlighted in green for committee information. The RFO further advised that based on band D calculations that the precept is standstill meaning no increase has been requested by Hednesford Town Council.

Chief Officer advised members of the public that the budget was passed by full Council on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

- b. RFO provided a summary report of spend to date and answered queries relating to webpage, CCTV costs, CAB and cleaning costs.
- c. RFO advised that an internal auditor needs to be sought and presented 3 options to committee:

Black Rose  
Bradleys  
Support Staffordshire

Cllr R Turville and Cllr A Turville declared an interest in Black Rose due to previous acquaintances and that Black Rose oversees the family accounts.

A discussion followed about the 3 quotes and it was felt that Black Rose would be the preferred option due to knowledge of local councils and inclusion of an interim audit.

Proposed: Cllr L Harrison  
Second: Cllr P Jones  
Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright  
Abstain: Cllr R Turville, Cllr A Turville

**Action: Black Rose to be instructed by RFO to act an internal auditor for Hednesford Town Council**

d. Chief Officer provided a CIL Fund Update:

1. Hednesford Nursery School – awaiting costs from SCC
2. St Saviours Bell – awaiting invoice from builder
3. Community Learning – proposed start March/April – confirming dates with SSC
4. Hednesford Library – awaiting costs for feasibility study from SCC
5. CIL spend for heating costs – FOP Committee asked if they will support a motion with PGCC committee to request that CIL funds be utilised for repair to heating system at PGCC

Cllr L Harrison stated that concerns have previously been raised from members of the public about if this would be the best use of CIL funds but feels that there is no other choice but to spend the money and rectify the issues

Cllr A Roden asked why had the issues only now just been found out about

RFO gave a background overview of the problems with the heating system

Cllr R Turville felt a 3<sup>rd</sup> quote was required and proposed this option

Propose: Cllr R Turville  
Second: Cllr A Roden  
Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville  
Abstain: Cllr L Harrison

**Action: 3<sup>rd</sup> quote for heating repairs to be sought**

RFO and Chief Officer advised that a 3<sup>rd</sup> quote may be difficult to find due to the specialist nature of the heating system and creates additional delay before it will be able to go to full council. A conversation followed about the need for a maintenance plan. Cllr R Turville advised that he may have a contact to provide a 3<sup>rd</sup> quote which he will pass to the RFO

Cllr A Turville proposed an amendment to the action. If 3<sup>rd</sup> company does not come back with a quote within next 7 days that the 2 quotes already in place will be taken to full council for further debate

Propose: Cllr A Turville  
Second: Cllr L Harrison

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

**Action: RFO to contact 3<sup>rd</sup> company and invite to quote. If 3<sup>rd</sup> company do not come back within 7 days, then to proceed with 2 quotes already gained**

- e. Chief Officer gave an overview of Prosperity Fund spend to date and requested that it was placed on record that decisions regarding the Prosperity Fund spend were made by the Chief Officer due to nothing coming back from Council on how they wished to utilise the funds. The Chief Officer further explained that if the money was not spent then it would have been lost and a knock on effect would mean that CCDC would then potentially receive less grant funding overall from central government for 2024/2025. Currently awaiting notification from CCDC on spend for 2024/2025 and the allocation is to be utilised and used within the town centre and surrounds.
- f. RFO provided overview on the matured Nationwide account and the need to move to a new savings scheme before outlining options that were available

A conversation followed on accessibility to monies and an understanding of which yield the better interest rates. It was agreed to remain with Nationwide and for the RFO to move the monies into the best account

Proposed: Cllr P Jones

Second: Cllr R Turville

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

**Action: RFO to make decision on best account to action and move monies in accordance**

- g. Chief Officer sought guidance from FOP committee on how they wish the Community Grant Scheme to run following the changes made for 2024 allocation to how the grants were previously allocated.

**Action: Chief Officer to feedback amended changes to the HTC Officer team**

## **6. Operations**

- a. Chief Officer sought guidance and direction from FOP Committee on how they wish the Chief Officer and the HTC Officer team to action and progress publicity relating to Council business

Cllr L Harrison enquired how this has been done previously and was not aware of the process. Cllr R Turville requested that he like an in depth discussion at full council about this

Cllr Harrison felt that it was important for both Officers and Councillors to know where their remits lie regarding publicity

Proposed: Cllr R Turville

Second : Cllr P Jones

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

**Action: Agenda item 7a To be added to full council agenda for 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

- b. Chief Officer enquired if committee also wish to take the webpage content into full council based on the resolution made in agenda item 6a

Proposed: Cllr A Turville

Second: Cllr R Turville

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

**Action: Agenda item 7b To be added to full council agenda for 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

- c. RFO informed that Business and Financial risk assessments need to be in place prior to the audit and draft copies had been circulated to committee for review and input

No issues or concerns raised by Committee

Propose: Cllr A Turville

Second: Cllr P Jones

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

**Action: RFO and Chief Officer to continue to populate where required and take final draft to full council for approval on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

## **7. Personnel**

- a. Cllr P Jones advised that he had spoken with Cllr A Pearson. The Chief Officer requested when the date will be set. Cllr P Jones advised that it will need to go to full council.

Cllr L Harrison sought clarification that it will be the Chair and Deputy Chair of Council who will carry out the appraisal of the Chief Officer

Cllr A Turville enquired by which date the appraisal should be done and was informed 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Chief Officer asked if there was already an appraisal process in place. Cllr P Jones advised that he does not believe that historically that there is. Chief

Officer suggested that should an appraisal process not be put in place by committee before the actual appraisal can take place and a conversation took place regarding whose remit this would be

Proposed: Cllr L Harrison

Second: Cllr P Jones

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

**Action: Cllr R Turville and Cllr A Pearson to action process and date for Chief Officer appraisal**

Cllr L Harrison requested clarification and update at full council meeting that the appraisal had taken place or a date has been set

A discussion followed about standing orders which state that the FOP Committee is responsible for the appraisal of the Chief Officer and that this does not need to go to full council. Chief Officer advised that Standing Orders were signed off by council in May 2023 and cannot be changed without a motion until May 2024. Bold font outlines legalities that cannot be amended, lower case font can be amended, Standing orders state that the Chair of the Council and the Chair of FOP Committee will carry out the appraisal

Cllr L Harrison proposed an amendment to the action

Propose: Cllr L Harrison

Second: Cllr R Turville

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

**Action: Cllr P Jones and Cllr A Pearson to action process and date for Chief Officer appraisal**

- b. Cllr A Turville asked if agenda item b should also belong with item a and should this fall under the appraisal. Cllr A Turville informed that the Chief Officer has already provided details to Councillors relating to the Chief Officer job description as well as the roles and responsibilities of Officers

Cllr L Harrison stated that the job role has evolved since it was written and that council need to ensure that it is workable and still relevant

Chief Officer asked to note to record the reason for the inclusion on the agenda of item 7b is due to the need of having to outline on more than one occasion what the role of the Chief Officer is to Council and due to derogatory comments, which were made about the Chief Officer at full council in their absence

- c. Chief Officer updated on the progress of the temporary Project Support Officer and requested approval of the job description so that the vacancy can be advertised

Chief Officer answered questions and queries relating to the Project Support Officer role

Proposed: Cllr P Jones

Second: Cllr L Harrison

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

**Action: Chief Officer to proceed with advertising job vacancy**

830pm – Standing Orders suspended

Propose: Cllr P Jones

Second: Cllr L Harrison

Agreed: Cllr P Jones, Cllr L Harrison, Cllr A Roden, Cllr S Cartwright, Cllr A Turville, Cllr R Turville

Cllr A Turville enquired who would be carrying out the interview. Chief Officer advised Chief Officer and Chair of FOPs Committee Cllr P Jones. Cllr A Turville queried if it should be the Chair of the Council and was advised that in line with Committee Delegations that it is the Chief Officer and Chair of Council

- d. Chief Officer provided an update on the candidates for co-option and format for co-option process

Cllr A Roden enquired if the voting process would be by a vote of hands or a blind ballot. Chief Officer advised that it would be in accordance with the standing orders and a show of hands

**15. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2024 at 7pm

Meeting Closed at 8:36pm

Signed (Chair of FPOPs Committee):

Date: