

MINUTES of the **Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee** Meeting held on Thursday 20 June 2013 at 6.30 p.m. in the Shire House Suite, Bodmin

PRESENT: Chairman, Councillor R Solomons, presiding; together with Councillors A J Coppin, M Denholm, J Gammon, S J Horne, L G J Kennedy, P Kerridge and K W Stubbs. Councillors J R Gibbs, J H Hartill, A M Kerridge, J M Lyne, P L G Skea and S R Stephens were also present but did not vote, not being members of this Committee.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Banks (Responsible Finance Officer) and Mr D Kinnair (Senior Projects Officer).

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES: The Chairman had no announcements and apologies had been received from Councillor H G Vanderwolfe.

FSPM/2013/050 **Election of Vice-Chairman**

Councillor K W Stubbs was unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman of this Committee for the ensuing year.

FSPM/2013/051 **Public Representation Session** – Mrs Karen Goodman was in attendance but wished to make no representation.

FSPM/2013/052 **Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee Meeting held on Thursday 18 April 2013**

The Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee meeting held on 18 April 2013 had been before Council and were acknowledged as a true record.

FSPM/2013/053 **Correspondence –**

- a) **Letter from the Parish Church of Saint Petroc regarding the closed Churchyard in Bodmin** - this letter was circulated with the Agenda and was noted.
- b) **Letter from Mrs Nola Solomons regarding Bodmin and District Age Concern's hire charge for use of the Shire House Suite and kitchen**– this letter was tabled at the Meeting.

The Chairman, Councillor R Solomons declared a pecuniary disclosable interest in this item being Chairman of Bodmin Age Concern and left the Meeting during the discussion and voting thereon.

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor K W Stubbs took the Chair.

The RFO reported that following a request to service the oven in the main kitchen in Shire House, Cornwall Catering Equipment advised that they could not service the oven due to it not conforming to current regulations. They also advised that the grill and fryer were not fit for purpose being at the end of their useful life and not conforming to current safety regulations, consequently these items have been removed.

Councillor L G J Kennedy advised that a report with three quotes and a

recommendation to replace the existing oven was being brought to the Properties Committee Meeting scheduled for 27 June 2013.

The RFO confirmed that the hire charge increase mentioned in Mrs Solomon's letter was following a review of all hirer fees and in line with an inflation increase.

Following discussion and a suggestion from Councillor M Denholm, it was **AGREED to RECOMMEND** that the hire charge for the use of the kitchen be reduced by 50% until such time as a decision is taken on the replacement of the oven/range.

Following the discussion and the vote thereon, Councillor R Solomons returned to the Meeting and resumed the Chair for the remainder of the Meeting.

- c) **Any other item of correspondence that the Chairman considers appropriate** – there were no other items of correspondence.

FSPM/2013/054 **Terms of Reference of FS&PM Committee for consideration** – a draft of the Terms of Reference for this Committee were circulated with the Agenda.

The RFO requested that bullet point 11 be amended by the substitution of the word 'approve' to replace the word 'consider'. The RFO advised that this change would enable urgent decisions to be made immediately so as to alleviate any delays caused by the Committee schedule.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to adopt the Terms of Reference subject to the amendment as outlined above.

FSPM/2013/055 **Draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013**

The RFO circulated the Draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013

The Chairman, Councillor R Solomons took the opportunity to pay tribute to the RFO for her exceptional work in the preparation of this Draft Statement of Accounts.

The document was reviewed on a page-by-page basis with the RFO identifying significant variances and key points as follows:

- The RFO explained that the Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the proper accounting practices issued by the Accounting Standards Board and the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils; and,
- The RFO informed that the Statement of Accounts included the Annual Governance Statement, which detailed that BTC will concentrate development on:

- (a) Ongoing review of policies – ensuring they are ‘fit for purpose’ and meet legislative requirements and best practice, particularly the various parts of the Localism Act 2011 and associated guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government;
- (b) Continued work / development on the Risk Register and action plans to minimise or ameliorate significant risks; and
- (c) Continuing with its commitment to training and development of Members of staff.

The RFO requested with Members that any comments or changes they wanted implemented should be provided to her by Friday 28 June 2013.

Councillor M Denholm congratulated the RFO on an excellent piece of work in preparing the Statement of Accounts, which she found was simple to read, understand, transparent and showed the highest standards of good governance.

Councillor P Kerridge commended the RFO on this work and gave particular praise this year as this work was undertaken at the same time as the extensive restructuring process, due to the budgetary cuts implemented resulting from central government reform and localisation of the Council Tax, which was also a considerable amount of work.

Councillor P Kerridge suggested that a review of the information we collate and supply to the public in the Annual Financial Statements and Annual Report should be undertaken at the next Project Prioritisation Committee, to ascertain if this can be reduced so as not to over-burden the remaining staff available following the staffing level review.

Councillor M Denholm was of the opinion that these documents in their present format were a priority for the Council to produce as they highlight to the public what the Council does with the precept monies and that staffing levels should be accommodated so as to produce them in the future.

The RFO reported on some other items of expenditure that were in excess of the Council’s budget, which have not been highlighted in the Accounts, which were:-

- Rhind Street Car Park funded by internal borrowing with replacement of £6,000.00 per annum in the Special Projects Reserve;
- £3,600.00 was reimbursed to Bodmin Town Football Club following investigations that BTC’s water supply was actually a sub-meter of the football club and they have been paying for BTC’s machinery shed water since it was built. This has now been rectified and BTC’s share of the water bill is paid on a quarterly basis;
- Electricity costs have increased by 20 per cent and gas costs were up by 7 percent compared with last year;
- The External Auditor has been contacted by a Bodmin elector, who had raised concerns over aspects of the Council’s financial governance, in particular surrounding the exchange of one piece of land for another and

has requested all information relating to the land exchange. The RFO highlighted this issue as the Auditor may charge BTC for investigating this further.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** that, as these items, were all agreed through Committee and ratified by Full Council throughout the year the financial statements should remain as set out.

It was further **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Extra-Ordinary Council Meeting to be held immediately following this meeting that the Draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2013 be adopted.

FSPM/2013/056 **Bodmin Town Centre CCTV System Annual Report 2012/13 for Consideration** - the SPO commended the report by the Acting Town Clerk to the Committee.

The SPO confirmed that there would be a review of CCTV coverage in the town incorporating a scoping exercise this year undertaken by the CCTV Committee, and Officers in liaison with the Police.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** the CCTV System Annual Report to 31 March 2012/2013 for adoption by Full Council at the meeting scheduled for 18 July 2013.

FSPM/2013/057 **Replacement Booking System** – the RFO reported that at the FS&PM Meeting held on 13 December 2012, it was agreed to use Timewade to supply the replacement booking system, which has not worked properly for a number of months.

As part of the original conversations with SAGE (the Council's current accounts package support Company) it was stated that this booking system would integrate with Sage to produce invoices directly from the booking software.

These invoices would need verifying prior to despatch but would significantly reduce the workload that is duplicated by the Accounts Assistant.

The RFO reported that Timewade have contacted her and explained that although this is an option, BTC can only use the invoices in one continuous line, meaning that all comparators with the accounts would be lost and only one income code could be used.

After some investigatory conversations, it was suggested that with three days development work from Sage, this system could be adapted to accommodate exactly to BTC requirements at a cost of £695.00 per day.

Timewade has agreed to pay half of the development costs and the RFO suggested that BTC agrees to the other half of the costs to a maximum of £1,042.50 plus VAT.

Whilst the RFO appreciated that this was above the original quotation, the improved package would be far more efficient than anything that BTC has

previously used and will save considerable amounts of staff time, resulting in savings far in excess of this sum.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** the upgrade of the replacement booking software for a cost not exceeding £1,042.50 plus VAT.

FSPM/2013/058 **Local Audit and Accountability Bill – Guide from the Department for Communities and Local Government** – the SPO reported that in July 2012, the Government published the draft Local Audit Bill for consultation and pre-legislative scrutiny, to which BTC had provided comments.

On 9 May 2013, the Local Audit and Accountability Bill was introduced into Parliament and a plain English Guide to this legislation was circulated with the Agenda and was noted.

FSPM/2013/059 **Cornwall Council Liaison Matters** – there were no items for discussion or consideration

FSPM/2013/060 **Schedule of Monthly Accounts – June 2013**

The Schedule of Accounts for June 2013 was approved and passed for signing from cheque no. 120939 to 120997 in the sum of £76,418.36.

Due to the confidential nature of the next business, it was **RESOLVED** to go into Committee. Please see separate page.