
POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**MINUTES**

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth on 14 March 2022 from 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

Councillors present:

Sarah Nelmes (Chair)
Matthew Bedford (Infrastructure & Planning Policy)
Stephen Cox
Steve Drury (for Cllr Giles-Medhurst)
Ciaran Reed (for Cllr Debbie Morris)
Alex Hayward

Chris Lloyd (Leisure)
Reena Ranger
Andrew Scarth (Housing)
Roger Seabourne (Community Safety and Partnerships)
Jon Tankard (for Cllr Sokalski)
Phil Williams (Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability)

Other Councillors in attendance – Joanna Clemens, Alex Michaels and Croxley Green
Parish Councillor Andrew Gallagher

Officers Present: Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
Alison Scott, Shared Director of Finance
Ray Figg, Head of Community Services
Rebecca Young, Head of Community Partnerships
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Charlotte Gomes, Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager
Malcolm Clarke, Waste and Environment Manager
Alex Laurie, Principal Tree and Landscape Manager
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

PR84/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Paula Hiscocks, Debbie Morris and Dominic Sokalski with Councillors Ciaran Reed, Steve Drury and Jon Tankard substituting.

PR85/21 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee on 24 January 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

PR86/21 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair had ruled that the following items of business, which had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting were of sufficient urgency to be considered by the Committee for the following reasons:

Item 9 – Appendix B to item 7 – Biodiversity Opportunities Audit, including Alternative Grassland Management - so that the Council can implement Alternative Grassland Management from April 2022.

Item 10 (Amendments to TRDC’s existing Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Operator policy) an updated policy was published after the Regulatory Services Committee with an amendment was to Paragraph 8.4 of the policy – so that the Committee can make a recommendation to Annual Council in May.

Item 11 - amended wording for Paragraph 8 under the Scheme of Delegation on Urgent decisions - so that the recommendation can go to Annual Council in May for ratification.

Item 11 - the appointment of a Vice Chair to the Environmental Forum so that the appointment can be made at the Annual Council meeting in May with all the other annual appointments.

Item 15 – an updated report (Senior Structure at TRDC) was published after the agenda was published but the original report was published on time – so that the Council can start the appointment process.

PR87/21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

PR88/21 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING PROJECT

The Head of Community Partnerships reported that this was a joint bid which was submitted to the Community Renewal Fund last year led by the Herts Growth Board and Stevenage Borough Council with all 10 Districts signed up to be part of the project. The total project funding was over £700k and a Project Steering Group had been set up led by Stevenage Borough Council with a Project Manager employed and the costs being met through the project costs and grant funding. The Project Steering Group reported to the Herts Growth Board. The grant funding was received towards the end of last year with the Local Enterprise Partnership financially accountable for the project but with regular reports given to both Boards.

The project would look to work with micro businesses, the voluntary sector, community groups as well as social enterprises to look to strengthen the local economy and increase social value by creating job opportunities and access to training. There are five main activities as part of the project which had been outlined in the report but the main focus was on Activity 3 which was around establishing schemes and projects in the voluntary sector, social enterprises and small businesses to increase job prospects and training. The aim of Activity 3 was to achieve some of this through the delegated grant scheme for each District and referred Members to Paragraph 2.8 onwards in the report which outlined what the proposals were for using the funding. The proposal was for us to work with Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) to deliver the grant scheme and to help us to administer it. We have £50k available with £10k to be given to two voluntary sector organisations, £10k to one micro business and £10k to W3RT. The final £10k would be used as part of the Countywide project and grant scheme which would allow 3 organisations which work across the County to support some organisations and businesses to become more carbon neutral and help with their sustainability. Applications would be submitted to W3RT and the Council will work with them to identify the micro organisations which would be eligible to apply for a grant. Details had been included in the report on outputs and outcomes that we were expecting to see and W3RT would be expected to report back to us and work with the voluntary organisations/businesses to deliver these outputs and outcomes. WBC were

also looking at this option and are we are working together to do this through W3RT by running two schemes one in Watford and one in Three Rivers. The Memorandum of Understanding from Stevenage Borough Council had been reviewed by the Solicitor to the Council and was acceptable.

The recommendation was that the grants be administered through W3RT who had a wealth of knowledge in the local community and had run a number of different grant schemes and were very much able to deliver the project.

Councillor Chris Lloyd thanked the officers for all their work on the project and for the comprehensive report and moved the recommendation so that the scheme can be operated.

Councillor Alex Hayward was happy to second the motion but sought clarification on identifying organisations and the applications process. The report talked about dealing with the grants efficiently but wanted to ensure it was delivered fairly across the District and that all Wards would benefit.

The Head of Community Partnerships advised that there would be an application process which would be open to all to apply and we would be communicating that through all media channels and through W3RT who had a large database of organisations. We would also approach other organisations in the District to apply so that we got a good range of organisations from across the District. There would be certain criteria which would need to be met to show that they can deliver the outputs and outcomes but we would be including in our agreement with W3RT that we target the whole District and that the organisations were working across the whole area. A report would be provided to the Council on where the organisations are based and what they would be delivering.

On being put to the Committee the Chair declared the motion CARRIED the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Agreed to the proposed process for allocating and administering the grant money locally through Watford and Three Rivers Trust for Activity 3 of the Community Wealth Building Project.

PR89/21

STAFF ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER

The Head of Community Partnerships reported that this was a proposal to introduce a Staff and Member Environmental Charter although the title of the report had not included "Member" it should be for both Staff and Members which was outlined within the report. The reason for the Charter was to look to embed our Climate Change ethos across the Council in our everyday work in making decisions, implementing policies, day to day working life of staff and Members. This would only form a small part of our action plan but would help to deliver the declaration made by the Council two years ago around the Climate Emergency. The Charter would be included as part of the new staff inductions and would look to promote the work we are doing across the Council such as the Green Heroes project. It was felt that the Charter was important for staff/members who are not directly involved in delivering the Climate Change projects but all have a part to play. The appendix attached to the report was an example of the type of poster the Council would look to put up around the Council offices to promote our vision. The poster focused on signing everyone up to how the Council want to work and would be used as part of the induction with the second part around what we are looking to do across the District as part of our Climate Change strategy.

Councillor Phil Williams welcomed the report coming to the Committee and moved the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford. The Councillor was pleased to see the Council were now holding some meetings virtually.

A Member said they were very environmentally minded and supported the implementation of the Charter but questioned the wording which seemed to move into the personal life of staff/members. The Member would not wish to see someone sanctioned because they had their thermostat high one day and wanted to make sure the Council were not intending to sanction anyone.

Councillor Alex Hayward thought there was an issue with the wording and allowing people to have freedom to do what they want at home and should not refer to people's home life.

The Chair had read the wording as aiming to inspire people to change their behaviour and had no concerns.

A Member could not understand the concerns that were being raised around the wording and it was up to the people themselves whether they adhere to the Charter or not.

Councillor Andrew Scarth thought the point in the Charter could be amended to read "Aim to inspire our officers to be advocates for Climate Change."

The Chief Executive advised that the report had been brought to the Corporate Management Team, which HR are a member of, and everyone on the Team was happy with the Charter.

Councillor Alex Hayward moved an amendment to the Charter wording, seconded by Councillor Reena Ranger, for the Charter to read "Aim to inspire our officers to be advocates for Climate Change at work and in their personal lives should they choose to."

On being put to the Committee the amendment to the motion was declared LOST by the Chair the voting being 3 For, 7 Against and 2 Abstentions.

The original motion to adopt the Charter as worded and to form part of the Council's commitment to deliver the Climate and Sustainability Action Plan was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 8 For, 0 Against and 4 Abstentions.

RECOMMEND:

The Environmental Charter as part of the Council's commitment to deliver the Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.

PR90/21

ALTERNATIVE GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Chair wished to move an amendment to recommendation 13.2 and for the recommendation to read:

"That the implementation of the action plan be agreed within the £100k budget approved as part of the 2022/23 budget decision with additional funding sources being sought for the balance working in partnership with other community based organisations. Funding for future years will be brought forward as part of the 2023/24 budget process."

The Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager reported on the outcomes of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit and the proposals for the Alternative Grassland Management which brought together all the factors to be considered

and the benefits Biodiversity would bring across the District. The proposals should be seen as the start for the process which would continue throughout this year and subsequent years but would not be static. The key headlines were:

- A five year action plan had been developed following the outcomes of the audit and were detailed within Appendix C;
- Officers would seek to work with the local community to implement these proposals and would seek external funding opportunities where possible;
- Details on the Alternative Grassland Management regime could be viewed from Point 2.15 onwards in the report. In order to use consistent percentages it was advised that officers would focus on available grassland, excluding sites where grass was kept short for specific purposes, e.g. football pitches;
- Currently the Council kept 62% of available grassland as long grass for biodiversity benefits. This would increase to 77% following the changes outlined with a 15% reduction in grassland kept as general amenity;
- These proposals offer a variety grassland management regimes and was based on using the right regime in the right place but also to achieve the biodiversity benefits;
- At point 2.24 of the report 31% of grassland would be conservation grazed and would include existing sites at the Chorleywood House grounds, Croxley Common Moor and the Withey Beds and the introduction of grazing at The Horses' Field at Leavesden Country Park this summer;
- All of these sites had been agreed through the Committee process and following public consultation. Aside from the biodiversity benefits that grazing brings some of these sites are subject to a Countryside Stewardship Scheme and higher level stewardship as endorsed by Natural England or are Triple SI sites which included Croxley Common Moor;
- Following the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit further sites would undertake a hay meadow cut and lift which would include Berry Lane, Mead Place, Denham Way, Tanners Hill, Rickmansworth Park and Fortune Common plus the continuation of the pilot sites which were introduced in 2021;
- Officers are continuing to look for opportunities to cease mowing and to move to a hay meadow cut and lift where appropriate. For example, during 2022/23, as part of the preparation for a new Management Plan for the Aquadrome, officers had identified new opportunities for an increased cut and lift. Later in the year officers would be updating the Management Plan for the Chorleywood House estate and would look for opportunities to change the grass cutting method for the main lawn area from general amenity to hay meadow cut and lift. Due to the sensitivities of the site this needed to be consulted with the public on first;
- Next year and in future years as new Management Plans are produced for open spaces, officers would continue to look for these opportunities to increase the areas of cut and lift;
- The proposed changes to the grass and management regimes at the sites across the District would be implemented from April this year.

A Member referred to the report where it said we would not be cutting football pitches and similar and asked how far around the football pitches would we not be cutting as quite often there are people who want to come and watch the games and that was part of the recreation ground which appeared we were not going to be cutting.

In response the Principal Landscape Officer advised that officers had allowed for a 4 to 5 metre buffer zone around these areas.

A Member was pleased to see the report come to the Committee and thought it was fantastic and could not wait to see the proposals implemented. This was still a document in progress. One issue they did have with anything around rewilding projects was a lot of people don't believe in Climate Change in certain sectors of work and life and thought it was a myth so it was vital that we educate people and this document encouraged residents to come forward with further areas, such as Jacketts Field, and tell us where we can go further to give people ownership. Giving people ownership will help the Council move forward to combat the effects of Climate Change.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 35(b) a member of the public spoke on the report.

The Lead Member thanked the public and the speaker for attending the meeting. We all had the same goal to make Three Rivers a greener and more sustainable place to live. We are already doing a lot of things but there was always room for improvement and this was highlighted within the proposed changes and the work of sustainable groups in Chorleywood, Abbots Langley and Oxhey. The Councillor supported the report and said we would see greater biodiversity and grassland management but there had to be a mix. The expert advice received had highlighted that before any kind of grassland management was undertaken it was important to survey the grassland to find out what wildlife, flora and fauna are there and the best way to manage it. The Council had done that by undertaking the audit and bringing the report back to the Committee. Meadows containing rare plants and animals needed particular careful management as these areas are not all the same and each meadow was different. Consideration needed to be given on whether it was grazed, cut and lifted or woodland and this had to be managed in different ways. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and other Conservation Groups positively encouraged managed conservation and grazing recognising along with cut and lift is was one of the best ways to increase biodiversity. We have to have different forms of management to increase our biodiversity which was what the report sets out. It was about having a balance of different grasslands and different habitats encouraging more biodiversity than any single method could do. The Council had brought in experts to carry out the audit and are now acting on this to encourage all different types of grassland management. This project would evolve as we move forward and there would be further public consultation at the end of the summer to come back to Committee. If the public see a piece of land which could be managed differently let us know. The Councillor wished to thank Charlotte, Alex and other officers for all their work in the very short timescales

A Member thanked officers for the detailed series of reports and thorough approach to this matter but had an issue with the communication on this and the ability to engage with residents. There seemed to be a failure of Councillors to communicate with residents and the aim of 50%.

The Chair advised that it had always been stated that cut and lift was not always the solution in every area, particularly the Withey Beds, as it would kill the ants there. That was why there was a mixed set of proposals which had been provide by professional experts.

The Lead Member advised that 77% of the available land would receive a conservation management in grass cutting not 24%.

A Member wanted to see football, rugby and cricket and all other sports continue but wanted to increase biodiversity. We all needed to look at our lifestyle and it was great that we all wanted to change the community but there are many people we need to bring with us as many who see the grass not being cut would not understand it and

we all have our work to do in that educational process. They thanked officers for the detailed work and the work in getting the consultants into help us. Some people may want an area to be meadow but some people may want to be able to have a picnic and therefore there are different interests we have to make a balance on.

The original proposer of the motion advised that in May 2021 the motion had been submitted to ask the Council to cut and lift up to 70% of its grassland. The motion came forward to Committee in November 2021 but had been changed to up to 50%. It was agreed the Council would look at opportunities to cease mowing of up to 50% of grassland for non leisure purposes. It had been advised that the Council were already cutting and lifting up to 50% of grassland. The report showed the pilot sites were only achieving 3%. What we need to do is cut and lift up to 50%. 24% was not enough and would not make a big enough difference. Not all sites had been audited, just the small sites, and none of our big sites - for example Leavesden Country Park - where there was most potential. They had been completely left out and could result in no cut and lift taking place. The Wildlife Trust had pointed out the Park would not be appropriate for cut and lift which meant the site was withdrawn from this process. On the other methods proposed, including conservation grazing, it would not deliver in the same way as cut and lift and was expensive and complicated and meant some areas were shut off do the cattle being in the area. Cutting and lifting was the easiest and simplest thing for us to do. The Member asked if the Committee could go back to the 50% cut and lift of available grassland which was agreed through the motion in November 2021.

A Member said everyone seemed to be set only on cut and lift but having read the report and read the advice of the experts we are told that cut and lift is not appropriate for all areas so to pluck an arbitrary figure of 50% out of the air and then insist we enforce that was not the best way to take this forward. What needed to happen was to take the advice of experts who had looked at the sites and follow their guidance which was exactly what we are proposing to do if the report is agreed. The figure of 24% quoted was the top two points under Paragraph 2.24 but the Member referred to the third point on uncut and the fourth point on conservation area grazing and if you added up those four lines it came to 57% which was more than half. They wondered why Members wanted to override the advice of the experts and do something for the sake of an arbitrary target. It would be more sensible and much more achievable to reach the biodiversity gain across the whole District if we follow the advice given.

Councillor Alex Hayward said we should be listening to what the public want and we should stick to the motion and 50% and wished to move an amendment to the recommendation and that we agree 50% cut and lift and identify the areas in order to achieve this. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Reena Ranger.

A Member wished to see four replacement oak trees at Huntercrombe Gardens following the felling of four trees. The ornamental trees in the Ann Shaw play area are lovely but asked that they not be crab apples otherwise they will be thrown into the garden of a resident in Ferryhills Close. They did recall we had said up to 50% but would like to hear from officers on whether they had examined all the sites to see if we can get nearer to 50%.

A Member seemed to think all the focus was just on cut and lift. It was a way of moving forward but if a better way had been found it would seem ridiculous not to consider it. They did not know how cut and lift worked but taking out conservation grazing for cut and lifting did not take into consideration getting the vehicles there, disposing of the lift, transporting the lift to the recycling depot and taking the vehicles back as opposed to the animals doing it and being recycled on site with virtually no damage to the external environment.

The Head of Community Services advised that the audit was very much around the smaller sites and not those which have management plans in place. If there are other opportunities officers would be very happy to look into them from across the District.

A Member said residents had spoken that we move this forward and a motion had been submitted to the Council which was passed unanimously at Committee only to come to this Committee in January and here again now. It looked like this seemed to be the correct way to start this and noted that the management plans of the larger sites would be reviewed and looked forward to seeing progress on this and wished to stick to what we had been promised through the amendment put forward.

On being put to the Committee the amended motion was declared LOST by the Chair the voting being 4 For, 8 Against and 0 Abstentions.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation as set out in the report with the amendment put forward by the Chair was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

- 1) Approved the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit Action Plan proposed in Appendix C and the delivery of an alternative grassland management regime as set out at 2.32 and within Appendix D, subject to any comment from the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee
- 2) That the implementation of the action plan be agreed within the £100k budget approved as part of the 2022/23 budget decision with additional funding sources being sought for the balance working in partnership with other community based organisations. Funding for future years will be brought forward as part of the 2023/24 budget process

PR91/21 MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

The Chair advised that under Rule 11(5) of the Council Constitution it was agreed by the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of Council and the Motion Proposer that the following motion be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Ciaran Reed, seconded by Councillor Reena Ranger moved the motion as follows:

This Council condemns the Liberal Democrats national policy of a housing target to 380,000 homes a year due to the potential threat that poses to the rural nature of Three Rivers and resolves to write a letter to the Liberal Democrat Leader and our Three Rivers MP Daisy Cooper asking them to conserve Three Rivers.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared LOST by the Chair the voting being 3 For, 9 Against and 0 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

The Motion is LOST

PR92/21 INTRODUCTION OF A STREET TRADING POLICY (LICENSING)

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the report had been to Regulatory Services Committee for recommendation to this Committee. Email correspondence had been received from Watford Rural Parish Council seeking an opinion on whether they needed a street trading license for their own market in South Oxhey. Officers felt that was a matter which could be considered outside of the policy. The policy does not name South Oxhey market but did suggest that markets do require a single trading license but not specifically for South Oxhey. The Legal advice that Watford Rural Parish Council had received conflicted with

the legal advice officers had received and was a matter which would be explored but outside of this policy.

A Member advised that they were not very happy to support the policy while there was an ongoing dispute between Watford Rural Parish Council (WRPC) and this Council.

Another Member also raised concern around the dispute with WRPC and agreeing the policy while the dispute was still taking place. In terms of the options available they wished to opt for Option 2 to delay and allow the dispute to be resolved but wanted to understand if there would be any substantial risks in delaying adoption of the policy.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the officer view was that this policy did not add to or affect that decision on South Oxhey as the policy does not mention South Oxhey market and mentions markets generally and the view was that those markets would require a street trading policy. Evidence will be put before officers when they consider the circumstances of the South Oxhey market and it may no longer be required but there may be other markets in other circumstances that do require street trading. In terms of the delay we can continue to receive street trading applications and they would be assessed by officers outside any of the new policy requirements as we have done historically for a number of years. For officers the sooner we can move this policy forward the better.

A Member queried the roads excluded from street trading and referred to Chorleywood Whitelands Avenue and could not understand why the whole of Whitelands Avenue was excluded as it was mostly a residential street apart from the Parade.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that a number of the prohibited streets were residential. The decision to prohibit them was made by Council in 2007 and needed updating. The report does advise that officers would look at that over the next 12-18 months.

A Member said if the Council had operated for a number of years without this policy and there was currently a dispute over markets surely a delay of a month or two would be more amicable and was struggling to see any disadvantages in delaying and wondered how many applications would be affected and impacted by the delay.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the Council had received very few applications over the last year and did not consider that significant numbers would be affected. However, they did not think that this policy had any bearing on the decision on South Oxhey as it does not mention South Oxhey specifically as a market. There are other markets coming forward to start operating and they could be captured by this policy. Officers would continue discussion on South Oxhey market but whether Members adopt the policy or not tonight does not affect the view that would be taken on South Oxhey.

It appeared that WRPC were the only Council which had responded but most of the markets would be put together by the Parish Councils. Had we checked with them that they had picked up on the consultation and would the Rickmansworth French market fall under this policy? Would the Parish Councils be able to fulfil the requirements of the policy?

Councillor Roger Seabourne moved the motion to adopt the Policy and moved Option 1 as set out in the report. The issue with regard to South Oxhey market had nothing to do with this policy. They did not wish for the Council to not have a policy for officers to follow.

The Head of Regulatory Services advised that the Council had gone out for consultation with a number of interested parties and residents initially. WRPC had advised that they had not seen the consultation so officers extended the consultation period for a further 21 days. They were not aware if officers had specially asked the Parishes to respond to the consultation but they were notified.

A Member said their understanding was that WRPC were not notified of the consultation but picked up details via a public notice and had not gone out to WRPC directly and was why the consultation period was extended. They had seen the legal advice that the Council were relying on but was not persuaded by it. Whilst there was the dispute with WRPC and the South Oxhey market they were not able to support the policy.

The Head of Regulatory Services said initially the consultation did not go out to the Parishes but it was extended for a further period so that Officers could notify them.

Councillor Matthew Bedford said it was good to receive the assurance that the correct procedure was followed and seconded Councillor Seabourne's motion to move Option 1 and agree the policy now. The whole reason why reports are published in advance of meetings was so that Members can read them and flag up any concerns and did not wish to see a delay in agreeing the policy.

Councillor Ciaran Reed moved an amendment to the motion and proposed Option 2 which would give a further chance for consultation if required and also allow for further input into the policy and for the concerns raised to be addressed. This motion was seconded by Councillor Stephen Cox who said they had raised their concerns with officers at the Regulatory Services Committee meeting but was not convinced by the information received to them that WRPC did not have a case.

On being put to the Committee the motion to go with Option 2 was declared LOST by the Chair the voting being 4 For, 8 Against and 0 Abstentions.

On being put to the Committee the motion to go with Option 1 was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 8 For, 4 Against and 0 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

Agreed the Policy with the following amendments:

- The definitions section to include reference to Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 as the Act.
- Paragraph 2.1.4 should be amended to remove reference to sections 29-31 and add section 10.

PR93/21

AMENDMENTS TO TRDC'S EXISTING HACKNEY CARRIAGE, PRIVATE HIRE AND OPERATOR POLICY

The Head of Regulatory Services reported that Members would have seen some correspondence received from a resident of South Oxhey about the policy but their comments actually referred to a price increase for Hackney Carriages which in the Officers opinion was a separate matter and would be considered outside of this policy. The amount paid per mile for a trip had not be reviewed for a while and would come forward as part of a separate report.

A Member referred to the reference in the policy to the One stop shop and the old opening hours and asked that this be corrected.

A Member asked if it was right to include details of opening hours in the policy if they were to be updated as the policy would then be required to be updated every time they changed. It was agreed that the policy be amended to state “in line with the published opening hours.”

On being put to the Committee the recommendation with the amendment was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

The amended policy with a further amendment on the opening hours to read “in line with the published opening hours”.

PR94/21

COUNCIL CONSTITUTION, URGENT DECISIONS AND APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

The Principal Committee Manager advised that at the Constitution sub-committee meeting held on 7 March they had considered revised Contract Procedure Rules.

The Chair moved, seconded by Councillor Andrew Scarth that the recommendation at 10.1 be agreed.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

To approve version 10.1 of the Contract Procedure Rules with the Council Constitution being amended accordingly.

The Principal Committee Manager reported that the Constitution sub-committee had put forward the following amendment to the Scheme of Delegation (Part 3) under Paragraph 8:

8.1 To take such urgent action which is in the best interests of the Council where there is not time to convene the appropriate committee. Such action will be taken in consultation with the Group Leaders which expression shall where necessary for this paragraph 8 include Deputy Group Leaders acting in their place

8.2 Any urgent action taken under 8.1 and in consultation with Group Leaders will whenever possible be by unanimous agreement. The Leader of the Council will at their discretion determine at what point agreement has not been possible having regard to the urgency of the matter. The Chief Executive will give effect to any urgent decision reached by unanimous agreement.

8.3 Where agreement has not been reached under paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2, proportionality will be applied to the decision of each group leader to the effect that their decision reflects the number of seats held by their party on the Council and the Chief Executive will act in accordance with the decision of the group leader or leaders commanding a majority of seats on the Council.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes proposed, seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd the amendment be recommended to Council.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

8.1 To take such urgent action which is in the best interests of the Council where there is not time to convene the appropriate committee. Such action will be taken in consultation with the Group Leaders which expression shall where necessary for this paragraph 8 include Deputy Group Leaders acting in their place

8.2 Any urgent action taken under 8.1 and in consultation with Group Leaders will whenever possible be by unanimous agreement. The Leader of the Council will at their discretion determine at what point agreement has not been possible having regard to the urgency of the matter. The Chief Executive will give effect to any urgent decision reached by unanimous agreement.

8.3 Where agreement has not been reached under paragraphs 8.1 and 8.2, proportionality will be applied to the decision of each group leader to the effect that their decision reflects the number of seats held by their party on the Council and the Chief Executive will act in accordance with the decision of the group

The Principal Committee Manager reported that the Constitution sub-committee had recommended that an additional appointment be added to the annual appointments at Annual Council with regard to the appointment of a Vice Chair of the Environmental Forum

Councillor Sarah Nelmes proposed, seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd that this additional appointment be added to the appointments made at Annual Council

RECOMMEND:

To add to the appointments at Annual Council the appointment of a Vice Chair on the Environmental Forum.

PR95/21

CORPORATE FRAMEWORK 2020-2023 (Corporate Actions 2022-2023)

The Head of Community Partnerships advised this report provided details on the annual corporate objectives which come to the Committee each year to recommend their adoption to Council. They had been taken from the Corporate Framework which had been agreed for 3 years. This was the last year of the Corporate Framework and during 2022/23 officers would be undertaking a review of the framework and objectives. There had been some minor changes to the wording of the objectives for example on Climate Change, as this strategy had now been adopted the objectives states that we will deliver the strategy instead. In the appendix it provided details of the Corporate action plan for the next financial year 2022/23 which included key actions from across the Council and details on how we would deliver those objectives. This will be promoted was agreed to residents.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd to recommend the Corporate actions to Council.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

Agreed the Corporate Framework Action Plan and objectives for 2022-2023, attached as Appendix 1 and recommends to Council.

PR96/21

TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING FINAL SERVICE PLANS 2022-2025 FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

The Committee received the following service plans:

Committee, Corporate Services, Customer Service Centre, Economic and Sustainable Development (Local Plan aspects of the service plan), Elections, Legal, Property Services and Major Projects, Finance and Revenue and Benefits

Councillor Stephen Cox referred to the Elections service plan and the 90% target on the annual canvass return, which should be for each Ward, and thought this was not stretching and challenging enough and wondered why the same target was being put forward and whether there could be any movement on this. This was the cornerstone of the democratic process.

The Chief Executive advised that the target could be increased to 92% for each Ward.

Councillor Stephen Cox supported the 92% percentage return target.

On being put to the Committee the amended motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstentions.

RECOMMEND:

That the service plans be recommended to Council with the amendment to the Elections service plan that each Ward achieve a 92% annual canvass return.

PR97/21 BUDGET MONITORING – PERIOD 10 (JANUARY)

The Shared Director of Finance reported the key changes were on the revenue account with regard to the loss of income due to the pantomime closing early before Christmas due to Covid but this had been offset by an increase in curb side recycling income. On the capital programme the key movements were around delays in replacing the grounds maintenance vehicles due to finding a suitable alternative replacement and also on retail parades.

A Member asked about Watersmeet. They appreciated that Covid had hit and the pantomime but queried the saving of £22,360 on materials due to the cancellation of the pantomime after 16 performances and queried the possibility of recovering some of the monies paid to the panto producers, which would reduce our expenditure by a maximum of £48,000.

The Head of Community Services advised that there was an income split with the producer taking circa 70% of the income and the Council circa 30%. This was on the same lines as other contracts of this sought. The producers were paid an advance towards the costs of the production and actors. The £22,360 saving is the difference between the budgeted amount to be paid to the panto producer and the actual amount paid. Negotiations are taking place to agree where the costs fall, which may result in the panto producers paying some of the £48,000 back to the Council.

A Member referred to the increase budget required for the Killingdown Farm public inquiry and if this happened for other sites how do we mitigate these costs.

A Member said the cost was what the Council had to pay to fight the public inquiry due to the application being refused and the developer appealing that decision which they were entitled to do.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford the recommendation as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 3 Abstentions.

RECOMMEND:

That the revenue and capital budget variations as shown in the table at paragraph 6.1 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

PR98/21

SENIOR STRUCTURE OF THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Head of Human Resources reported that the report recommended the creation of an additional post at Senior Management level. The current structure had been in place since 2009 and had served its purpose well but the Council had now changed its approach including looking at the risk appetite and competing more commercially in the market place. Creating capacity at Senior Management level was required to drive these initiatives forward. The Council had also noticed through the past 22 months with Covid a potential lack of resilience at a Senior Management Level. The report set out the recommendation for creating a new full time Executive Head of Service which would be at a management grade level reporting direct to the CEO which would allow the CEO to focus on the strategic objectives of the Council and taking the policies and objectives forward. If the recommendation was agreed the proposal was to advertise internally only. There was also an additional point in the report around creating a new full time Head of Customer Experience which would bring together the areas of customer services, communication and Watersmeet and would come under the new Executive Head. The Council would be looking to appoint to the Head of Service internally from the two people who are impacted by that change. The report also sets out the financial implications for the changes and that the costs would be met from existing budgets.

A Member queried the costs of the new roles and also the proposal to advertise internally only to a select group of people instead of opening up the post externally although they acknowledged we did have some talented officers a more competitive selection should be considered. They had concerns about the on costs of £21,280 for someone who was already employed.

The Shared Director of Finance clarified that the on costs was national insurance and the employees' pension costs etc not for bringing someone in the post.

The Head of Human Resources advised that in terms of advertising internally one of the things the Council was proud of was the development of individuals in the Council and the career development opportunities. Three rivers was keen to promote and develop internal staff which provided motivation and career development. We have very strong Heads of Service who are ready for that next step up and promoting those staff gave them the opportunity to step up. They would still need to go through the interview process and demonstrate that they have the skills to sit at that strategic level in the organisation. If the internal candidates did not meet the standard then the post would be advertised externally.

A Member said surely the calibre of the internal staff would be strong competition against any external candidates.

The Chair said going externally would be a very expensive process and would be unfair to the internal candidates.

The Head of Human Resources said for any external recruitment you would look to hire a search company to find people who would then charge a fee plus advertising fees and was quite an expensive process. They were aware a number of organisations had done internal advertising only and was an

acceptable and preferred option so officers can see there are promotion opportunities.

A Member asked how advertising internally sat with equality, diversity and inclusivity.

The Head of Human Resources advised that it was an accepted practise to promote from within the organisation as long as you open it up to everyone. We are not stopping anyone from applying. An internal policy is acceptable practise and is being recommended for the reasons provided.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Andrew Scarth the recommendations as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 9 For, 3 Against and 0 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- i) Agreed the creation of a new Executive Head of Service post at MG5.
- ii) Agreed to internal only advertising for this role in the first instance.
- iii) Noted the creation of a new role of Head of Customer

PR83/21 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee's received its work programme. There was an additional special meeting to be added in May to appoint to the sub-committees.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

CHAIR