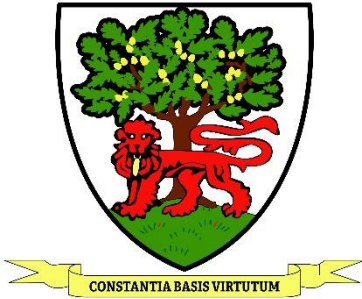


ANDOVER TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of Policy & Resources Committee

Time and date

6.30pm, Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Place

The Lights, Andover

Details of Attendance:

Members of the Committee:

Cllr S Hardstaff (Chairman) (P)

Cllr K Bird (Vice Chairman) (P)

Cllr L Gregori (P), Cllr J Hughes (P), Cllr R Hughes (P), Cllr R Kidd (P) Cllr R Meyer (P), Cllr H Neate (P),
Cllr E Reynolds (P)

Officers Present:

Gail Foster (Town Clerk)

County/Borough Councillors: Cllr Z Brooks

Members of the Public: 7

Members of the Press: 1

PUBLIC SESSION

PR 054/01/24

Q: A member of the public commented that he didn't understand the mockumentary episode that had been published by Cllr J Hughes before Christmas. He felt that tighter control by the council should be evident in the future and that any episodes should be reviewed by a group of people and guidelines adhered to.

PR 055/01/24

Q: Is the mockumentary style of video still going ahead? He repeated the concern that a group decision should be made for new episodes.

APOLOGIES

PR 056/01/24

There were no apologies received at the meeting.

INTERESTS

PR 057/01/24

Councillors were reminded of the Standing Declarations of Interests which had been approved by Council for Councillor E Reynolds as a Member of the Drove Allotment Association and a plot holder and Councillor H Neate as an allotment plot holder. Councillors K Bird, S Hardstaff, H Neate and E Reynolds declared an interest in item 5 of the agenda.

MINUTES

PR 058/01/24

It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: FOR – 8, AGAINST – 0, ABSTENTIONS - 1**, that the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 10 January 2024 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record. **Action: Committee Officer**

MOCKUMENTARY

PR 059/01/24a

Members considered if the Town Council's reputation had been impacted by the publication of the mockumentary and reviewed whether there were lessons to be learned. Some strong opinions were aired with some councillors stating they felt the council's reputation had been tarnished, and other councillors disagreeing with the opinion.

PR 059/01/24b

Publishing the video using the councillor prefix: Cllr L Gregori advised his view that Councillors should not be speaking on behalf of council as this function is delegated to the Town Clerk. He advised that the Media Policy wording is quite clear that Councillors should make it very obvious that they are not speaking on behalf of council when using their Councillor prefix. His opinion as a lawyer was that the media policy should reflect this too.

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor L Gregori and **RESOLVED: FOR – 6, AGAINST – 3, ABSTENTIONS – 0**, that the Council's reputation had been impacted and that the Media Policy must be made clearer regarding the use of the Councillor prefix. **Action: Town Clerk**

PR 059/01/24c

Use of council equipment for a personal video:

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor E Reynolds and **RESOLVED: FOR – 7, AGAINST – 0, ABSTENTIONS – 2**, that a policy and procedure for the use of council equipment be formulated. **Action: Town Clerk**

PR 059/01/24d

Coverage in the Andover Advertiser using the councillor prefix: This motion was unanimously withdrawn.

PR 059/01/24e

Clarify ownership of version 2 of the video: Cllr J Hughes stated that he owned both versions of the video as he had filmed them both.

Cllr R Hughes asked that the legal advice that had been requested by the Town be shared, and asked what the cost of the advice was. The Town Clerk stated that a complete answer had not yet been received, but that costs so far were £165+VAT.

Cllr K Bird suggested that if the Intellectual Property Rights to videos belonged to the producer, then it may not be wise to produce any more mockumentaries if they would not belong to the Town Council.

Cllr R Hughes explained that this would impact on the students at Andover College if the project was abandoned.

This issue had been considered by Officers and Cllr J Hughes in the days before the meeting. A consent form for the students to handover their IPR to the Council had been drafted. The draft form had been sent to the Council's legal advisors for comment.

Cllr L Gregori stated that this may put the Council in a position of censorship of what the students produce, and this may not be desirable.

Cllr R Hughes asked councillors to note that the only costs incurred by Council so far, were the costs of the microphones which were less than £400.

The Town Clerk and Cllr J Hughes explained that they had discussed the idea of a Working Group to review the scripts produced by students, and to give feedback before filming was started. The scripts could also be reviewed by the Charities who were to be the subject of the mockumentaries. This would ensure that no time was wasted filming scenes that may ultimately be rejected by either the council or the charities. The working group would assist with highlighting where rewording would be appropriate, and would not get involved in rewriting.

The work experience for the Students of the College was due to commence on 19 February for two weeks and a lot of preparations had been put in place by Officers and Cllr J Hughes.

Cllr H Neate suggested that it might be an idea to set up focus groups to gather feedback on projects, such as this one, and she would take this idea to the next C&E WG for further discussion.

Cllr K Bird expressed concern regarding the process that would follow. Cllr H Neate suggested that a Risk Assessment be drafted, Press Lines agreed, and an equality impact assessment be created before final approval of the scripts.

Cllr J Hughes advised that he had his own microphones, and other equipment, so if Council did not approve the episodes, he could assure Council, that no council assets or funding would have been used to produce any videos. Therefore, if required, he could publish independently with a disclaimer to distance the council from his personal project.

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor E Reynolds and

RESOLVED: FOR – 7, AGAINST – 0, ABSTENTIONS – 2, that:

- a. The legal advice about ownership of the videos be shared when complete.
- b. Terms of Reference for a Script Writing Working Group be drafted.
- c. An invitation for Councillors to join the Script Writing Working Group be circulated.

Action: Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Councillor S Hardstaff and seconded by Councillor E Reynolds and

RESOLVED: FOR – 5, AGAINST – 3, ABSTENTIONS: 1, that sections ii and iii be deferred.

Action: Town Clerk.

MEDIA POLICY REPORT

PR 060/01/24 Members considered Officers' concerns with the Media Policy, relating to the capacity used, when Members are providing information to the Media.

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor E Reynolds

that the specific clause in the current media policy relating to use of the Councillor prefix be maintained before considering the Media Policy any further.

Cllr R Hughes stated that he would rely on Article 10 of the Human Rights Act for his freedom of expression and use the prefix Councillor when he wished. He objected to the suggestion that he would need to make a clarifying statement when talking to the Press.

A vote was taken.

RESOLVED: FOR – 4, AGAINST - 4, ABSTENTIONS – 1.

The Chairman, Councillor S Hardstaff, used his casting vote, in favour and the motion was passed.

Three members of the public left the room at 7.40pm.

POLICIES

PR 061/01/24a

Assets Policy

It was proposed by Councillor L Gregori and seconded by Councillor K Bird and

RESOLVED: Unanimously, that the policy be renamed Assets Loan Policy, and the sentence "Any Town Council asset that is under £500 will be removed from the Asset Register," would be deleted. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

After amendments had been made, the Policy would be recommended to Full Council for approval. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

(Councillor H Neate left at 7.45pm)

PR 061/01/24b

Equality & Diversity Policy

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor E Reynolds and

RESOLVED: Unanimously, that the policy be amended under the Implementation Section to replace Chairman with Town Clerk. Under the first bullet point, "Town Clerk" would be deleted. Any reference to "he/she" should be replaced with "they." **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

After amendments had been made, the policy would be recommended to Full Council.

Action: Deputy Clerk.

(Councillor H Neate returned at 7.47pm)

PR 061/01/24c

Media Policy

The following amendments were proposed:

- A. To insert "any material" instead of "written material."
- B. To remove sentence stating "Councillors should be aware that case law states..."
- C. To amend paragraph 3 on page 2, and replace "She/he" with "They" and make the policy gender neutral.

Cllr S Hardstaff clarified that the draft policy had come from NALC.

(a member of the public left at 8.07pm)

It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: FOR – 6, AGAINST – 0, ABSTENTIONS – 3**, that the policy be recommended to Full Council after the amendments had been made. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**
The sentence which states “Councillors should be aware...” would be investigated, and the source of the wording would be attempted to be found. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

PR 061/01/24d Defibrillator Policy

It was noted that the first section should be amended to take out the unnecessary notes. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

It was proposed by Councillor J Hughes and seconded by Councillor K Bird and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the policy be recommended to Full Council after the amendments had been made. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

PR 061/01/24e SIDS Policy

Councillors discussed the following amendments to the policy:

- That the Planning Committee should have oversight of the Speed Indicator Devices.
- Locations do not need to be mentioned in the policy.
- Autospeedwatch should be removed.
- Location numbers / device numbers should not be mentioned.
- SIDs should be consistent. (capitalised or plural / singular)
- Replace with: “a number of devices, which are moved every 4 weeks on a rota, through approved locations.” (Take out 5 lines.)

The Town Clerk displayed the Officers’ latest device location list on the projector screen, and explained that the status of each location that had been proposed was listed and followed up.

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor L Gregori and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that:

- a. The amendments would be made to the policy which would then be recommended to Full Council. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**
- b. Officers would investigate whether the requirement to move the devices periodically was set in legislation, or whether it was just a Hampshire County Council requirement. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**
- c. The device location list would be uploaded to the website and updated monthly. **Action: Deputy Clerk.**

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor E Reynolds and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the meeting be extended beyond the two-hour period by thirty minutes.

PR 061/01/24f Allotment Allocation Policy

Councillors discussed the policy and suggested that “and has a long list of people wanting to gain a plot,” be deleted.

It was proposed by Councillor E Reynolds and seconded by Councillor L Gregori and **RESOLVED: Unanimously**, that the policy with the amendment be approved. **Action: Town Clerk.**

SCHEME OF DELEGATION

PR 062/01/24

Members considered an increase to the Town Clerk's permitted delegated spending, as recommended in the Internal Auditor's report. It was proposed by Cllr K Bird to approve the proposal as made on the agenda paper, but this was not seconded.

It was proposed by Councillor K Bird and seconded by Councillor R Hughes and

RESOLVED: Unanimously, that the Town Clerk's delegation be raised to £1,000. **Action: Town Clerk.**

The Financial Regulations would be checked, and it would be established where changes would need to be made, to increase committee spending. **Action: Town Clerk.**

A business case for increasing spending by Committee would be drawn up. **Action: Town Clerk.**

NEXT MEETING

PR 063/01/24

Members noted the next meetings:

Policy & Resources Committee on **Wednesday 13 March 2024**, to be held in **The Lights, Andover, starting at 6.30pm.**

Full Council on **Wednesday 21 February 2024**, to be held in the **Upper Guildhall, Andover, starting at 6.30pm**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.28pm.