

**Honiton Town Council
Policy Committee**

Minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held at the Town Council Offices, The Beehive, Dowell Street, Honiton on Tuesday 29th March 2016 at 7.00pm

Members present

St Michael's Ward

Cllr K Hopkins
Cllr C Melbourne
Cllr D Perkins

St Paul's Ward

Cllr P Halse (Chairman)
Cllr J Lake
Cllr A Mountjoy
Cllr G Smith
Cllr K Smith

In Attendance

One member of the public

Sarah Jenkins - Deputy Town Clerk

16/12 To receive apologies for absence

Cllr S Edwards (P), Cllr C Kolek (A/L); Cllr J Wadsworth (P)

16/13 To receive declarations of interest and receipt of request for new DPI dispensations on items on the agenda

None received.

16/14 Confidential / exempt items

There were no items to be dealt with in this way.

The Chairman declared the meeting out of session

16/15 Public Question Time on items on the agenda

One public question had been received with regard to agenda item 8 (To review progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the SWAP report dated 18th March 2015). Mr Nix presented his question with regard to the Beehive Business Plan version 6 and requested that consideration be given to identifying, in the appropriate management column, the point at which for a project the aim and limitations are defined. Mr Nix further requested that the point at which the Plan was originally written be identified in the management column.

Cllr Lake joined the meeting at 7.08pm

The Chairman thanked Mr Nix for his question and advised that the purpose of agenda item 8 was to review how the recommendations made in the SWAP report have been carried out.

The SWAP report recommended that the purpose of Business Plan version 6 should be clarified for Councillors. This was implemented as part of the information provided to Councillors following the election in May 2015 and was intended to ensure that all Councillors understood the decisions which had been taken previously.

The Beehive is now operated under a Management Plan which is the responsibility of Honiton Community Complex Ltd.

The Chairman declared the meeting back in session

Cllr Perkins left the meeting

Part A matters for decisions

16/16 To review the [Complaints Procedure](#) and to make recommendations to the Town Council

A copy of the Code of Practice for Handling Complaints had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Cllr Perkins re-joined the meeting

In response to a question regarding any complaints made about Town Councillors as individuals, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that any such complaints relating to a potential breach of the Code of Conduct are forwarded to the Monitoring Officer. The Complaints Policy deals with complaints about the Town Council's procedures or administration.

It was agreed that all complaints to be handled under the Town Council's Code of Practice for Handling Complaints should be considered by a small committee set up by the Town Council, with membership appropriate to the nature of the complaint.

Cllr Smith proposed that, subject to the above agreed amendment, the Code of Practice for Handling Complaints be recommended for approval. This was seconded by Cllr Hopkins and was agreed unanimously.

Recommendation
<p>That the Code of Practice for Handling Complaints be amended to provide for all complaints regarding the Town Council's procedures or administration to be considered by a small committee, with membership appropriate to the nature of the complaint, and that, subject to this amendment, the Code of Practice be approved.</p>

16/17 To review the [Environmental Policy](#) and to make recommendations to the Town Council

A copy of the Environmental Policy had been circulated in advance.

It was agreed that the Policy be amended to include the following:

Specifically Honiton Town Council will:

- Where appropriate encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own actions
- When working with contactors, enquire as to whether the contractor has an environmental policy
- Where possible, seek to monitor and reduce the use of water, recognising that water is a resource

It was also agreed that the wording of the following points be amended to read as follows:

Specifically Honiton Town Council will:

- d) promote the waste hierarchy, re-use, recycling and the use of recycled materials and resources sourced from sustainable, ethical and local sources
- g) reduce waste and make the best use of resources by encouraging employees, members of the community and suppliers to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost

It was put to the vote and unanimously agreed that the Environmental Policy be recommended for approval subject to the above amendments.

It was also agreed that potential environmental impact should be included as a subject heading in the standard format for Town Council reports.

Recommendation

That subject to the agreed amendments, the Environmental Policy be approved.

16/18 To review the [Equalities Policy](#) and to make recommendations to the Town Council

A copy of the Equalities Policy had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Policy was discussed and the following amendments agreed:

- Section 2, bullet point 5 to read: *Every employee, councillor and volunteer working on behalf of the Town Council is entitled to training and development and fair promotion opportunities*
- Section 6 to read: *It sits above all the other plans and is based on evidence and consultation. (Note: correction of typing errors only)*
- All references throughout the Policy to be to the Equality Act 2010 for consistency

Cllr Perkins proposed that, subject to the above agreed amendments, the Equalities Policy be recommended for approval. This was seconded by Cllr G Smith and was unanimously agreed.

Recommendation

That subject to the agreed amendments, the Equalities Policy be approved.
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16/19 To review [progress on the implementation](#) of the recommendations of the [SWAP report](#) dated 18th March 2015 and to make recommendations to the Town Council

A review of the implementation of the SWAP report had been circulated in advance detailing progress made against the report's recommendations.

It was noted that under section 2.2 (Courtesy and Respect) the clarification and implementation of sanctions against those who act inappropriately towards others is an ongoing matter.

Concern was expressed that some enquiries to the Monitoring Officer have yet to receive a response. It was agreed that these should be followed up by the Town Council office.

It was further agreed under Section 2.2 (Relationship between Honiton Town Council and EDDC), that a single point of contact to discuss issues that arise from time to time, should be requested again.

Cllr Hopkins proposed that, subject to noting that a further request be made for a single point of contact with EDDC, the Review of Implementation of the SWAP Report of 18th March 2015 be approved. This was seconded by Cllr Mountjoy and was unanimously agreed.

Recommendation

That, subject to noting that a further request be made for a single point of contact with EDDC to discuss issues that arise from time to time, the Review of Implementation of the SWAP Report of 18th March 2015 be approved.
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16/20 To review the [Forward Plan of Key Decisions](#) May 2015 – June 2016, to agree the items for consideration and to make recommendations to the Town Council
A copy of the Forward Plan had been circulated prior to the meeting.

The Forward Plan was discussed. Cllr Perkins stressed the need for resolution of the final account for the Beehive as this has a bearing on the Town Council's financial position. It was agreed that this should be included in the Forward Plan.

It was noted that the Town Council had referred the setting up of a Scrutiny Committee back to the Policy Committee for more detail (min ref 15/109) and that this should be followed up.

It was agreed to include the following items in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions:

- To review the agreed Action Plan
- To note the monthly internal review of control systems by Councillors

Cllr Perkins proposed that, subject to inclusion of all of the above points, the Forward Plan of Key Decisions May 2015 - June 2016 be recommended for approval. This was seconded by Cllr G Smith and was unanimously agreed.

Recommendation
That, subject to the inclusion of the agreed items, the Forward Plan of Key Decisions May 2015 – June 2016 be approved.

16/21 To close the meeting

The meeting was closed at 8.04pm.