

Meeting: Kingswood Town Council

Date: 9th January 2024

Author: Town Clerk

Item for Consideration: Clerk's Workplan Update

1.0 Resignation of Cllr Vicky Robinson

Cllr Vicky Robinson has resigned from the council, in order to give due attention to her other community work, and to avoid any conflict of interest that may arise in the future in pursuing her community work. The elections team has been notified and the process is to advertise the vacancy. If ten residents call for a poll, then SGC will make arrangements for the election (there will be a cost). If a poll is not called, then the vacancy can be filled by cooption by the council and invite residents to apply and to consider their application at a future meeting.

2.0 Policy Adoption

To create the necessary internal systems and have a process of strong governance it is necessary for the council to adopt a number of policies and procedures. Some are mandatory, some are advised, some are best practice. As the council will have its first audit in Spring 2024 it is necessary to get them in place as soon as possible. Policies are created from using recommended policies and templates from SLCC, NALC and reputable councils who already have adopted them, then tailored to the needs of Kingswood Town Council. As policies are adopted it will be necessary to review earlier adopted policies to ensure that they are all aligned.

The policies to be adopted at this meeting are:

- a. Cooption Policy and application form
- b. Dispensation Policy and application form
- c. Complaints Procedure
- d. Dignity at Work/Bullying and Harassment Policy
- e. Equality and Diversity Policy
- f. Procurement Policy
- g. Model Publication Scheme and Freedom of Information Procedure
- h. Terms of Reference for Planning Committee
- i. Sickness Absence Policy
- j. Disciplinary and Grievance Policy

Clerks Workplan update

4.1 This report provides an ongoing update of the actions that have been completed under a few business function headers. Its purpose is to ensure that the council is compliant with the necessary legislation and regulations that impact on town councils. It also gives councillors and the public confidence that matters are being managed, with the appropriate checks, review dates and transparency.

	Item	Action	Dates
Finance	Banking Arrangements	Unity Bank: still waiting for confirmation that the accounts is set up	Ongoing
	Finance Software	Rialtas Alpha systems (Receipts and Payment) purchased and in place, not in use until KTC has the bank set up. It will need to be upgraded to Income and Expenditure system if the budget increases.	By 1 st April 2024 need to implement an Income and Expenditure process
	Authorisation of payments procedure	All payments must be authorized by 2 councillors, and a payment list be presented to each council meeting.	Implemented from December 2023.
	VAT	Need to undertake a VAT reclaim from HMRC once payments are on the finance system.	Ongoing
	Bank Reconciliations	Need to present to committee meetings monthly once the process is in place.	Ongoing
	Budget	To discuss, consider and agree.	First discussion on 28 November, second discussion 12 December, with ratification on 9 January 2024.
	Year end processes	Need to ensure a system of internal control is in place.	In place by March 2024
	Financial Regulations	Adopted but will need to be revised by Finance and Administration Committee	18 May 2023 with an annual review
	Asset Register	Created	December 2023
	Contracts Register	Created	December 2023
	Investments Policy	Need to agree investment strategy and source suitable banks for deposits once precept 2024 is received	To be implemented in early 2024
	Reserves Policy	To be written	To be implemented in early 2024
	Procurement Policy	To be written	To be presented for adoption 9 January 2024
	Purchase Orders	To create a purchase order log	December 2023

Policy and Governance	Meeting Dates	Agreed 2 nd Tuesday of month in Park Centre	Agreed 12 December 2023
	Standing Orders and Code of Conduct	Adopted but needs amending (will do with Finance and Admin Committee)	Adopted on 18 May 2023 To review annually
	Creation of Committees with Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference for Finance and Administration and Staffing Draft TORs for Planning Committee	Adopted 12 December 2023 January 2024
	Delegated Scheme of Delegation and Authority	Completed but will need to be revised periodically	Adopted 12 December 2023
	General Power of Competence	Report completed	Adopted 12 December 2023
	Internal Auditor	Lightatouch engaged	Lightatouch engaged, decision at 12 December 2023 council meeting
	Office Address	To be sought	Ongoing
	SGC Planning Portal	Access given but might need to consider the need for a planning committee due to the number of applications to be considered.	Draft TORs for Planning Committee to 9 January 2024 meeting
	Transparency Code	Need to be compliant with all aspects of the code: Publication of all minutes, agenda, policies is being adhered to but other areas of the code must be implemented.	Ongoing To register with the ICO
	Register of Members Interests	Completed	Need to check every 6 months
	Insurance	Annual policy in place and covers Public Liability, Employers Liability, Council Assets, Fidelity Guarantee.	Review in May 2024
	Risk Management	Policies and risk assessments to be implemented	To be implemented by April 2024
	Information	Website privacy notice Need for a focus on FOI, GDPR, Privacy, Security Compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR 2018 and be fully compliant Publication Scheme	Adopted 18 May 2023 Needs to be implemented in early 2024 To be implemented January 2024

		Register with the Information Commissioners Office	Request to full council 12 December 2023
	Annual Governance Statement	Part of the annual review of internal governance and audit	March 2024
	Cooption Policy		January 2024
ICT	Website	Managed by contractor, updated by clerk	Completed and launched November 2023
	Emails	.gov.uk emails in place for all	Completed
	Phone	Land line number available for the council	Completed
	Security	Via provider	Completed
	Software	Via provider	Completed
	Training	Via provider	Ongoing
HR	Interim Clerk – 6 month contract	Contract Signed	November 2023
	JD, Contract up to date	Completed	November 2023
	Permanent Clerk after May 2024	For staffing committee to consider	Meeting 23 January 2024
	Other staff	Budget process has identified several large projects, which will impact on workload of staff: currently one full time clerk, might need to employ additional admin support as the workload increases	Ongoing
	Pay roll	Not yet sorted	Ongoing
	Pension	Not yet sorted	Ongoing
	Policy Implementation	Sickness Absence, Expenses, Disciplinary and Grievance	To be prepared for early 2024
Marketing	Face book	Live with growing number of followers.	Ongoing
	Website	Went live on 13 November 2023 and being updated regularly	Ongoing
	Press	Media Policy in place	Adopted 12 July 2023
Training	Clerk	Finance, internal control and community engagement	Ongoing
	Councillors	At your Place training agreed	31 January 2024