# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 1PM ON TUESDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2022 AT MATFIELD PAVILION

**Present**

Cllr J. Buttery (Chair) presided, A. Wells, A. Stout, C. Churchill, C. Brooks (Clerk).

**In attendance:** Cllr A. Akenhead

1. **To accept apologies for absence**

None.

2. **Review of the Minutes of the last meeting**

Minutes from the meeting of 8th November 2021 were briefly reviewed.

3. **To record declarations of interest in any item on the Agenda**

None.

4. **Strategy and Forward Plan**

**It was agreed** that Cllrs Buttery, Wells and Churchill would formulate a draft plan for the next meeting of the P&M Committee, with particular reference to the impact of the reduction in funding available to KCC, and how that might affect the Parish Council's own imperatives.

5. **Policies for review**

The Committee agreed that the Author of each policy would be listed as the Chair of the relevant Committee, rather than a named person, the Clerk would note this in the Schedule.

The Chair outlined that the core policies were reviewed annually and that half of the remaining policies would be considered every two years. The Clerk confirmed that these were minimum frequencies and that the Council could review policies at any time.

1. **Scheme of Delegation**

The Clerk outlined that this policy is used when the Council cannot meet or to allow for delegation in an emergency. The Scheme is provided for by s101 of the LGA as a way for a Council to work and was used to good effect during the pandemic when the Council was unable to meet.

The Committee agreed that it is useful to keep this policy adopted so that it can be invoked at short notice, albeit it is only used in very specific situations. Some small amendments related to named persons were agreed.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Scheme of Delegation as amended be re-approved by the Council.**

2. **Section 106 Funding Policy**

The NDP Steering Group will disband around February 2023 and when it does this policy allows for the Council to consider applications for s.106 funding from community groups for their own projects, which must comply with the terms of the contribution contract. Reference to the NDPSG was removed together with some other small amendments.

**RECOMMENDATION that the Section 106 Funding Policy be approved by the Council as amended.**

3. **Policy for Pre-Application Meetings with Developers**

The Committee discussed that this policy has been referred to several times and it was agreed that a policy to outline the extent of the engagement with developers, and how it is recorded, helps to underline the transparency of the Council's activities. It was noted that the policy relates to both pre and post application meetings with Developers and would be amended to underline this.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Policy for Meetings with Developers be approved by the Council as amended.**

**4. Website Charging Policy**

The Clerk explained that this policy is one that was created for use with the previous website and that the Council have not had any requests for paid advertisements on the relatively new community website.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the PC rescinds the Website Charging Policy**

**5. Grievance Policy and Procedure**

The Clerk advised that this policy is one of the policies that PCs are expected to have and provides a good basis for preventing complaints escalating. It has not been used but it is a recommended policy by SLCC and KALC.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Parish Council re-adopts the Grievance Policy unamended**

**6. Protocol for meeting with Local Organisations**

The Committee discussed the value of this policy as a useful guide given increased numbers of action groups generally.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Parish Council re-adopts the Protocol for Engaging with Local Organisations unamended**

**6. New Policies**

**1. Equality and Diversity Policy**

The Committee discussed a draft policy, which is a model template from the SLCC. The Clerk was asked to ensure that all terms used to describe various groups were current and in full.

**RECOMMENDATION that the Parish Council adopts the Equality and Diversity Policy as drafted.**

**2. Civility and Respect Pledge**

The Clerk had presented the text of the NALC template for the Pledge, together with email of explanation from KALC. The Clerk was asked to comment about her experiences related to the issues contained in the Pledge. The Committee felt that the requirement for Councillors to undertake training on issues already covered in the Code of Conduct was not necessary and that therefore the Pledge would not be adopted.

**Action:** The Committee requested that the Clerk provide a draft of a Dignity at Work Policy which would be considered at the next meeting of the P&M and the Chair would draft an element of a Pledge within that policy.

**7. Risk Management**

A Finance and Governance Risk Assessment review will be undertaken by the Finance Committee at the end of November.

The Clerk confirmed that Christmas events are not insured by the Parish Council however the Council reimburses the community group for the cost of the premium.

**1. Land and Assets Risk Register**

The Auditor has reviewed the Register and raised no matters.

**2. Risk for Toilet Blocks**

It was agreed that Cllr Buttery and Cllr Wells would complete a review of the Risk Register and add the toilet block to the schedule.

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Parish Council receives and notes the updated Risk Register**

**8. Terms of Reference**

The Clerk outlined that the Council currently has Terms of Reference for two of its Committees, the P&M and the Finance Committee but does not have ToRs for its Planning Committee because it currently doesn't meet, all planning resolutions are taken by the Full Council.

It was agreed that the quorum for the P&M would be set as 3 members, which is the Council quorum, and that the members would be Cllrs Buttery, Churchill and Wells.

1. **Traffic and Highways Working Group**

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Council approves the Terms of Reference for the Traffic and Highways Working Group**

2. **Environment and Sustainability Working Group**

**RECOMMENDATION: that the Council approves the Terms of Reference for the Environment and Sustainability Working Group**

**9. Council Management**

The Chair outlined that, per the terms of reference, this Committee should "Review staff workflow, responsibilities, training needs and interaction with Councillors, in conjunction with the appraisal process undertaken by the Employment Panel".

The Clerk commented that it was helpful to staff if Cllrs provided Agenda items, with sufficient background and clarity on the resolutions sought.

It was agreed that Committee membership would be approved at the next Full meeting of the Council and that all members of Committees undertake training.

**10. Date of next meeting:** March 2023