Minutes of the Policy Committee

A meeting of the **Policy Committee** was held on **Monday 16th September 2024** at **19:00hrs** at **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester Oxon, OX26 6PS.**

Present:
Cllr Paul Wheatley (Chair)
Cllr Tom Beckett
Cllr Sam Holland
Cllr Nick Mawer
Cllr Alisa Russell
Cllr Jim Webb

In Attendance:
Paul Canning, Deputy Town Clerk
Jodi Clarke, Finance Assistant
Brian Welters, Resident of Bicester

10/2425 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED that apologies were received from the following Committee Members:

- Cllr Rachel Mallows
- Cllr Nick Cotter
- Cllr Harry Knight

11/2425 Declaration of Interest

RESOLVED that a declaration of interest was received from Cllr Jim Web as he personally knows the outsourced HR support.

12/2425 Public Session

RESOLVED that Brian Walters attended the meeting to show his support for the proposed motion raised by Cllr Beckett. Mr Walters expressed to the Committee how the urgency & prompt action needed to make a positive contribution to the climate change. Mr Walters also expressed that it had been 5 years since the previous recommendation was approved.

13/2425 Policies for Review

RESOLVED that the following Policies were **REVIEWED** and **APPROVED**:

- GP11 – Complaints Policy
- GP24 – Tree Management Policy

Cllr Mawer expressed that the council hasn't been replacing trees as they should do in line with section 6.2 of GP24 – Tree Management Policy which states:

"*It is important to ensure that for every tree felled, at least one tree is planted in its place and is properly cared for. The size and scale of the replacement planting should reflect both the trees removed and the situation."*

14/2425 Motion – Emergency Climate Change

RESOLVED that Cllr Beckett presented his motion on the emergency climate change to the councillors and expressed the importance of following through with the recommendation that came from the Emergency Climate Change back in September 2019.

Cllr Beckett informed the councillors that the points 1, 3, 4 & 7 of the recommendation have not been actioned, these points are:

i. Declare a Climate Emergency and work to becoming a carbon neutral organization by 2030, to include scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

iii. Task the Policy Committee to investigate the creation of a grant pot to encourage and enable carbon reduction schemes within Bicester for the year 2020-21. The primary criterion for applications should be CO2 savings per pound spent.

iv. Where possible, include environmental implications of recommendations in officer reports alongside legal, financial and equality implications. These will include the impact of recommendations on CO2 emissions as well as any other environmental factors.

vii. Seek ways to facilitate and encourage our community in reducing direct and indirect CO2 emissions and to become resilient to changes caused by changing climate. We will take active steps where possible to encourage:

- More sustainable transport.
- Reductions in energy use in homes, businesses and elsewhere.
- Co-operation with organizations seeking to develop low carbon and community led affordable housing in Bicester.
- Use and development of renewable energy sources.
- Production, sale and consumption of locally sourced food.
- Any other methods of achieving the aims above.

Cllr Beckett expressed that the costs need to be identified & budgeted for the following year but gave a rough estimate of £5,000 - £10,000.

Cllr Beckett explained the difference between the 3 scopes:

Scope 1 – Direct emissions from owned or controlled sources.

Scope 2 – Indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy.

Scope 3 – All other indirect emissions in a company's value chain.

Cllr Mawer asked for clarification on whether this would be a standing report or placed onto the forward plan as the motion is not clear. Concerns were raised about bringing a consultant in to tell the council something they already know.

Cllr Beckett informed the group that these were alterations made as per the Town Clerks request, the motion reads as if it's a standing report but is to be put onto the forward plan until a time comes that a report can be presented to the committee.

Cllr Holland expressed his concern for staff as due to staff resources they may not have the capacity.

Due to staff shortages and the work that is going to be required to collate the information for budget creation the Chair asked the Deputy Town Clerk whether the staff had the capacity to take on the extra project at this time. The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Chair that it would put pressure on the staff at this current time.

RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** and **COMMENTED** the motion.

The Chair requested that the motion be brought back to the Policy Committee on the 8th October with the recommendation to approve the motion.

Cllr Mawer & Cllr Webb seconded the proposal made by the Chair.

15/2425 Forward Plan

RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** the Forward Plan.

The Chair informed the group of the findings from the Town Centre Group.

The Chair also added that the council have Rules & Regulation for the Sports that takes place at Council owned sites.

It was **AGREED** that a section needs to be added to the Policy page on the website that re-directs them to the open spaces page for the Rules & Regulations.

Date of the next meeting

Tuesday 8th October 2024 at 19:00hrs

CLOSE OF MEETING: 20:03hrs