

Town Council
5th December 2018 at 6.00pm

Present: Councillors: K Wattingham
D Abbott
J Carroll
D Dixon-Wilkinson
Ms L Ellaway
Mrs Y Farrell
Ms J Hillyard
M Kennedy
Mrs T McMahon
C Slough
T Welch

Officer: Louise Senior Head of Democratic Services

Apologies: Councillors: AS Swain
Ms S Thorne

9706 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs: A Swain and Mrs S Thorne.

9707 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

9708 SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

9709 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- External Investigation

Resolved: In accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

9710 EXTERNAL INVESTIGATION

At the council meeting on 8th October 2018 the following was agreed:

For the Chairs of Personnel and Corporate Services to immediately take steps to instruct a suitable independent person to undergo a full investigation into the events that led to Houghton Regis Town Council making an out-of-court settlement to What About Youth Limited.

For the independent person to meet with Town Council forthwith to agree remuneration, terms of reference and specific questions to be answered, together with an agreed time frame. The independent person shall provide the report direct to the Town Council, initially through the Chairman of the Council.

As this investigation was not in the budget of the current year, members direct that the costs were to be met from general reserves.

Members discussed the previous meeting and several members raised concerns regarding the information councillors had received prior to the vote which related to the internal investigation. It was suggested that some members had felt the information they had received was not accurate.

The meeting had been called upon the request of Cllr Abbott and Cllr Hillyard. These councillors had made the following suggested outcome:

To approve the appointment of the independent person on the terms discussed, to investigate the circumstances which led to the Council making an out-of-court settlement to What About Youth Limited, and to report back to the Chairman of the Council as soon as practicable.

Members discussed the fees of the external investigator at £615 per day plus expenses. External investigator had estimated that the investigation would not take longer than 5 days.

An amendment to the suggested outcome was proposed to read:

To approve the appointment of the independent person, sourced from SOLACE on the terms discussed, to investigate the circumstances which led to the Council making an out-of-court settlement to What About Youth Limited, and to report back to the Chairman of the Council as soon as practicable. The independent person shall have access to all records, written and electronic, and may take evidence from any person they deem relevant to the investigation.

The amended suggested outcome was put to the vote. A recorded vote was requested:

Proposed by: Cllr Hillyard Seconded by: Cllr Abbott

Votes for: Councillors: Ms J Hillyard, J Carroll, Mrs T McMahon, Ms L Ellaway, Mrs Y Farrell and D Abbott.

Votes against: Councillors D Dixon-Wilkinson, T Welch, C Slough and M Kennedy.

The amendments to the suggested outcome were carried.

Members voted on the suggested outcome: a recorded vote was requested:

Votes for: Councillors: Ms J Hillyard, J Carroll, Mrs T McMahon, Ms L Ellaway, Mrs Y Farrell and D Abbott.

Votes against: Councillors D Dixon-Wilkinson, T Welch, C Slough and M Kennedy.

Resolved: To approve the appointment of the independent person, sourced from SOLACE on the terms discussed, to investigate the circumstances which led to the Council making an out-of-court settlement to What About Youth Limited, and to report back to the Chairman of the Council as soon as practicable. The independent person shall have access to all records, written and electronic, and may take evidence from any person they deem relevant to the investigation.

Dated this 21st **day of** January **2019**

Chairman

DRAFT