



Minutes of the Meeting of the Confidential Town Council Staffing Committee held at 14:30 on Tuesday 30 July 2024 in the Small Hall of Corfe Mullen Village Hall

Present: Cllr P Purvis (Chair)
Cllr S Florek
Cllr S Jefferies
Cllr D Sowry-House

In attendance: Catherine Horsley (Town Clerk & RFO) – minute taker

The Chair of the Council opened the first meeting of the Staffing Committee in the 2024/25 municipal year.

SS 24/01 To Elect a Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024/25

Cllr Sowry-House proposed Cllr Purvis as Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2024/25. This was seconded by Cllr Florek.

Cllr Purvis accepted the position.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Purvis be elected as Chair of the Staffing Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

SS 24/02 To Elect a Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024/25

Cllr Sowry-House proposed Cllr Jefferies as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the municipal year 2024/25. This was seconded by Cllr Purvis.

Cllr Jefferies accepted the position.

It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Jefferies be elected as Vice-Chair of the Staffing Committee for the municipal year 2024/25.

SS 24/03 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr P Holland who was unwell.

The Terms of Reference states quorum shall be three or at least one-third of its members, whichever is greater in accordance with Standing Order no. 4d viii.

SS 24/04 To Record any declarations of interest Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)

There were no declarations of interest.

SS 24/05 **To Approve minutes of meeting held on 15 April 2024** LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2024 were **APPROVED**.

SS 24/06 **Paper B – To Consider and Review Delegated Powers of the Staffing Committee**

The Clerk presented the report, noting the agenda item was as a result of concerns raised by Cllr Jefferies at the recent Full Council meeting held on 23 July 2024 relating to the process and involvement of the Staffing Committee in the recruitment of the new Deputy Town Clerk.

Cllr Jefferies advised that following her recent attendance of the Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils (DAPTC) Personnel Committee training for Councillors, it was highlighted that all important staffing decisions should be made by the Staffing Committee, not one Councillor, to negate any future legal proceedings. Cllr Jefferies felt a Staffing Committee meeting should have taken place for the recruitment of the new Deputy Town Clerk with the Committee recommending approval to appoint to the Full Council.

The Clerk reiterated the recruitment process can be time sensitive, with Cllrs Purvis and Sowry-House providing some background to recent staff appointments, the process and the evidence held on file, should any legal proceedings be brought against the Council. The Clerk acknowledged the process should be reviewed to ensure it was fair, open and transparent with Staffing Committee members involved in the recruitment process of all staff.

It was **RESOLVED** for the Clerk to prepare a report to be presented at the next Staffing Committee meeting documenting the recruitment process and to provide copies of the scoring process, interview questions and tasks performed by candidates as part of the new Deputy Town Clerk interview process as examples.

It was **RESOLVED** to review the Staffing Committee Terms of Reference and the Councils Scheme of Delegation following consideration of the recruitment process report at the next Staffing Committee.

Members discussed the scheduling of meetings and felt meetings should be scheduled in the same way as other Committee meetings and approved at the Annual Town Council meeting held in May to ensure dates were diarised for members to be kept updated on staffing related matters. Should no agenda items need to be discussed, the meeting could be cancelled with sufficient notice and would not prohibit additional meetings being scheduled if required.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to the Full Council for Staffing Committee meetings to be held bi-monthly, with meetings taking place from October 2024 on the second Thursday of the month at 10:00. The Clerk to update the meetings schedules for 2024 and 2025 accordingly.

SS 24/07 **Paper C - To Consider Items in Respect of Staffing Matters**

The Clerk provided updates as follows:

Grounds Team – Following the internal advert for the role of Grounds Team Leader, one team member expressed an interest in the role. An informal interview process took place with the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Chair of Council on 18 June 2024.

It was agreed that the team member was not suitable for the role at the point in time. However, he was an excellent valued team member.

Recruitment of Deputy Town Clerk – The role was advertised externally with 18 applications received. Eight applicants were shortlisted for interviews conducted by the Clerk, current Deputy Clerk and the Chair of the Council on 26-27 June 2024.

Of the 8 applicants, 2 applicants stood out with one having more operational experience, particularly grounds maintenance, which was one of the key requirements of the role. The successful candidate, Daryl Pearce was offered the role and following references, was due to commence employment on Monday 5 August 2024 on the agreed terms and conditions. The new Deputy Town Clerk to attend the next Staffing Committee meeting to meet members.

Officer Recruitment – Acknowledging the considerable amount of resource time required to support the Council's future projects, particularly the relaunch and development of the Neighbourhood Plan and public consultation for the redevelopment of the Sports Pavilion and Recreation Ground, the Council are aware that a Project Management type role would be required sometime in the future. Following the interviews for the new Deputy Town Clerk, the interview panel felt one of the candidates had the skills set for this type of role with the Council to progress external advertising for the role as soon as possible.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to pause recruitment of the Grounds Team Leader role until following the new Deputy Town Clerk being in post and understanding the responsibilities of the team.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to commence recruitment of a Community Engagement and Project Officer, full time, 37 hours, Monday to Friday, SCP 22 - £31,364 per annum. Job description and specification shown in Appendix 2.

The update was **NOTED**.

SS 24/08 Paper D – To Consider Staff Salaries for 2024/25 Financial Year

The Clerk presented the report, noting the 2024/25 budget for staff costs allowed for a 6.5% National Pay Award, albeit the final award had yet to be negotiated by the NJC, and was anticipated to be circa 3.5% with one SCP increase should Council wish to review staff salaries.

The Clerk noted the FTE salary of the Senior Administrator should be reviewed as the hourly rate was lower than her direct report, the Senior Youth Support Worker.

The Clerk excluded herself from the meeting whilst members discussed all staff salaries.

Following discussion, the Chair invited the Clerk to return to the meeting. The Chair summarised the Committees discussion, with the Clerk as the RFO reiterating the budget allocated for staffing costs. Members felt all staff should be rewarded to their commitment to the Council and to ensure rates of pay were competitive with neighbouring Town & Parish Councils.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to increase staff salaries with effect from 1 September 2024 as follows:

- Town Clerk & RFO from SCP 39 to SCP 46 (phased over 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years)
- Deputy Town Clerk from SCP 26 to SCP 33 on completion of iLCA (equivalent to 75% of Clerks salary, phased over 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years)
- Senior Administrator from SCP 17 to SCP 22 (Part time pro-rata)
- Grounds Staff from SCP 10 to SCP 11 (Part time pro-rata)
- Administration Assistant from SCP 10 to SCP 11 (Part time pro-rata)

SS 24/09 Matters for forthcoming agendas No decisions can be taken¹

Cllr Jefferies questioned the Councils HR provision and whether the use of an HR Consultant when dealing with complex staffing related matters should be considered. The Clerk confirmed the Council pays an annual subscription to Southwest Councils for HR advice and should additional consultancy be required; this should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The annual appraisal of the Clerk to be carried out by the end of September 2024.

No further items were noted.

SS 24/10 To Agree a date and time for the next meeting – The next meeting to be scheduled on Thursday 10 October 2024 at 10:00 in the small hall of the Village Hall.

SS 24/11 Meeting closed at 16:25.

Signed as a correct record of the meeting..... Date.....

¹ Councils cannot lawfully decide items of business which are not specified in the summons/agenda (LGA1972 sch 12, paras 10(2)(b) and Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119)