

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 15 September 2014 commencing at 6 pm

Present: Cllrs Aldis, Jackson, Osborne, Pettitt, Runchman and Sutton (Chairman)

Absent: Cllr Groom

In attendance: One member of the public and the Town Clerk

1 Apologies for absence

Cllr Groom had sent apologies for absence. Cllr Osborne had sent apologies for his anticipated late arrival and Cllrs Aldis and Jackson gave apologies for their anticipated early departure. All apologies were due to competing commitments.

2 Declarations of interest

- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - None
- ii) Non-disclosable Interests - None

3 Minutes of previous HR Committee Meeting

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of a meeting of the HR Committee meeting held on 28 July 2014 and to confirm them as a correct record of proceedings.

4i) HR Sub-committee

The Chairman advised that as a member of the public was present to make representations to the committee the relevant agenda item would be taken next (ie item 5ii on the summons and agenda) which concerned a complaint made against the conduct of the Town Clerk which had been referred to the HR Sub-committee.

The member of the public read aloud a statement which had also been copied to all members of the council in which he disputed that he had made a complaint about the conduct of the Town Clerk. The statement went into detail about his correspondence and concerns regarding the treatment of his parents' headstones in Sandy Cemetery. In his statement the resident disputed the accuracies of information in STC correspondence, urged councillors to question the information provided in the letters and where it had come from and stated that the action proposed for dealing with his parents headstones was thoroughly unacceptable and a repulsive suggestion which STC should have realised. The resident asked the committee to rectify the damage by cleaning the headstones without delay.

The Chairman advised the resident that the business before the committee was his complaint against the conduct of the clerk not the cleaning of his family graves. This latter matter was being dealt with by the council's formal complaints committee. The resident stated that he had not made a complaint about the clerk and he had not made a complaint about what had happened to his headstones. He did not want these matters to be treated as complaints he wanted the headstones to be cleaned. But what he was complaining about

Sandy Town Council

was that his concerns had not been dealt with and he would continue to complain until this was sorted out. He also stated that the council had not adhered to its complaints policy timescale in dealing with his concerns about the graves.

The member of the public left the meeting.

The committee discussed the elements of the resident's correspondence and statements and which pertained to the conduct of the Clerk and agreed that these constituted a formal complaint about the Clerk. The Clerk stated her wish for the matter to be dealt with formally so that any findings were on the public record. Members noted that other aspects of the communications did not form part of the HR committee's remit.

- 4ii) The Chairman reported that the Town Clerk's appraisal had been partially completed. It remained for the Town Clerk to review the comments made by the Mayor and Chairman of HR and for any further discussions to be held. The Chairman noted that a great deal had been achieved during the period which the appraisal covered.

Matters affecting officer efficiency/Council's responsibilities as an employer*

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

- 5i) Members discussed a case involving a resident in which the council was taking legal advice in order to protect officers. The Town Mayor circulated an email received that day from the council's legal advisers and it was **RESOLVED** to request a copy of the letter referred to in the email prior to taking any further action.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would write to the monitoring officer for advice on aspects of the case.

- 5ii) A report on use of the council's unreasonable behaviour and vexatious complaints had been circulated before the meeting. Members noted that since its adoption the formal procedures within the policy had not yet been used in any case. Members discussed a case involving unreasonable quantities of communication from a resident which was having an impact on the work of officers. It was **RESOLVED** to continue direct member contact with this resident and to continue to follow the guidance in the council's unreasonable behaviour and vexatious complaints policy/procedure to find informal ways of resolving any issues at this stage. The clerk was asked to continue to monitor correspondence and to inform the committee if this became excessive and impacted on staff performance in the future.

Sandy Town Council

6 **Health and Safety/Accident Report**

A confidential report from the clerk on health and safety at work including details of a recent accident at work had been circulated before the meeting.

RESOLVED to note the report.

7 **Training**

A report from the clerk on training success and future training needs had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The clerk drew attention to separate recommendations from the council's insurers, EW and THSP that the clerk should attend NEBOSH general certificate training.

RESOLVED to note the report and to take it into consideration when planning the 2015/16 budget.

8 **Staff Premises and Restructure**

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

(Cllr Osborne joined the meeting.)

Staff Restructure – the Clerk gave a confidential presentation about arrangements for the implementation of the proposed staff restructure which included some changes to JDs previously considered, information about current and potential staff costs, other costs, the appropriate consultation processes for staff and the timescales involved. This information was discussed in some detail and the proposed structure was finalised. Members discussed the best way to present this information to Town Council on 22 September 2014.

(Cllrs Aldis and Jackson left the meeting during this discussion.)

RESOLVED to approve the suggested format for the report and to recommend implementation of the staff restructure (with immediate effect) to Sandy Town Council at its meeting on 22 September 2014.

Premises Alterations – the Chairman reported that a structural engineering survey to establish feasibility of the proposed alterations had been completed and it was planned to submit technical drawings to CBC for building regulations approval at a cost of £265.00 (excl VAT). Until the plans were finalised it was not possible to obtain costs for the work and no decisions would be possible without full costings. These matters would be dealt with elsewhere. However, the staff restructure was not dependent on structural alterations to the building.