

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 16 June 2014 commencing at 7.30 pm

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

Absent: Cllrs Osborne and Walsh

In attendance: Cllrs Cole, Sharman and Smith and the Town Clerk

Actions

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Osborne and Walsh

2 Declarations of interest

- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - none
- ii) Non-disclosable Pecuniary Interests - Cllr Pettitt drew attention to his friendship with individual directors of THSP.

3 Minutes of previous HR Advisory Group meeting

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting of the HR Advisory Group meeting held on 17 April 2014 as a correct record of proceedings.

Admin

4 Election of Vice-chairman

RESOLVED to elect Cllr Runchman as vice-chairman of the committee.

Admin

5 Terms of reference and meeting arrangements

The terms of reference were reviewed and meeting arrangements for the meetings scheduled for Monday 15 September 2014, Monday 17 November 2014 and Monday 16 March 2015 were considered. **RESOLVED** to amend the terms of reference to include the vice-chairman.

RESOLVED to hold an additional meeting in late July/early August date to be confirmed by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED to hold these meetings of the HR Committee at 6 pm.

Admin
Town Clerk

6 Council's responsibilities as an employer

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended) members of the public and press would be excluded for the next item of business which involved the likely disclosure of confidential personal information as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).

6.1 In line with the terms of reference of the committee and its

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schedule of activities the Town Clerk presented an annual confidential briefing on the Council's responsibilities as an employer, the roles and responsibilities of those involved with the council and the key issues concerning the operation of these roles and responsibilities during the past year. These issues included:

- Continued lack of clarity of roles and involvement in day to day management of staff by individual members of council
- Breaches of confidentiality eg confidential information disclosed to staff and members of public
- Staff perception of lack of job satisfaction
- Delay in resolving issues affecting staff eg staff restructure, grievance procedure
- Increasing workload

6.2 Members discussed a report from the Town Clerk on the impact of continued correspondence from a specific individual member of the public which was having a detrimental effect on the efficient working of the Town Council because of its quantity and content.

RESOLVED that the Town Mayor would seek advice from the Council's legal advisers and report back to the next meeting of the committee.

Cllr Jackson

7 Pension Arrangements

A report from the Town Clerk on pensions issues including the Council's statutory obligation to produce a Local Government Pension Scheme 2014 Employer Policy statement detailing Sandy Town Council's policy on discretionary aspects of the scheme by 30 June 2014 was discussed. The Clerk advised that a proforma to assist councils to make the relevant decisions had been prepared by Pensions Consultant Mark Crutchley, the document included appropriate policy statements depending on which discretions were selected. Several local councils (including Biggleswade, Flitwick, Houghton Regis, Dunstable, Leighton Linlade and others) were willing to share the cost of this document which was £1,350 plus VAT. At the time of the meeting it was expected that at least 7 local councils would participate in this sharing arrangement.

RESOLVED to note the Clerk's report and **to recommend** to Town Council that Sandy Town Council should participate in the joint purchase of the template document which would be less costly than employing expert advice direct. The Clerk was asked to other participants that the committee's view was that costs should be split by council not by electorate in each parish.

Town Clerk

8 HR and H&S Specialist Advice

A report from the Town Clerk on provision of specialist Human Resources support and Health and Safety Competent Person support to Sandy Town Council for the period beginning 1 August

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2014 had been circulated in advance of the meeting. An additional quotation was awaited and the report and quotations were considered in some detail.

RESOLVED to recommend to Sandy Town Council that its HR and H&S specialist support should be placed with THSP for a period of one year at the expiry of the current contract with Ellis Whittam.

Town Clerk

9 Interim Staff Report

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended) members of the public and press would be excluded for the next item of business which involved the likely disclosure of confidential personal information as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).

A report from the Town Clerk on interim management and staff arrangements implemented following the resignation of the former Deputy Clerk had been circulated in advance of the meeting and was discussed. The Chairman reported that since the report had been written a temporary administrator had been appointed and would commence work on 23 June 2014 for 6 months.

RESOLVED to write to the grounds staff team complimenting them on the appearance of the town over the weekend of the Sandy Carnival.

Town Clerk

RESOLVED to note the equally good work of members of the office and TIC staff and to thank them at the staff meeting to be held on Monday 23 June 2013 which the Mayor and Chairman would both be attending.

Cllr Jackson
Cllr Sutton

RESOLVED to note that the Town Clerk's performance appraisal was still outstanding and to make arrangements to complete this as soon as possible.

Cllr Jackson
Cllr Sutton

10 Staff Restructure

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended) members of the public and press would be excluded for the next item of business which involved the likely disclosure of confidential personal information as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).

A report concerning staff premises Members spent a considerable time discussing the implications of the council's current and future activities in terms of staff accommodation and the restructure of workloads and job descriptions. It had previously been agreed to delay the planned restructure and to review the position 12 weeks

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after the departure of the Deputy Clerk. The meeting planned for late July/August 2014 would be used as the start of this review period. Meanwhile, it was agreed to seek a cost for an additional drawing from the Levitt Partnership which might assist the committee to explore alternative scenarios for accommodation of staff at 10 Cambridge Road.

All committee members

Town Clerk

Members noted the urgency of progressing the staff restructures and it was hoped that the Mayor and Chairman's attendance at the planned staff meeting would provide reassurance about the council's intentions.

Cllr Jackson
Cllr Sutton

11 **Health and Safety Accident Report**

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended) members of the public and press would be excluded for the next item of business which involved the likely disclosure of confidential personal information as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).

RESOLVED to note a report on workplace health and safety including accidents, injuries and relevant general welfare issues which had been provided by the Town Clerk. There were no items requiring action arising from the report.