

**Minutes of a meeting of the Property and Personnel Committee held in The Fleming Room, The Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton BN17 5EW on Monday 18 March 2024 at 6.30 pm**

**Present:**

Councillor Dr Walsh KStJ – Chair  
Councillor Northeast  
Councillor O'Neill  
Councillor Butcher  
Councillor Tilbrook

Laura Chrysostomou, Town Clerk

**2023 to 2024**

**21. Evacuation Procedures**

The evacuation procedures were noted.

**22. Filming of Council Meetings, Use of Social Media and Mobile Phones**

The procedures were noted.

**23. Apologies**

There were apologies from Councillor Worne who due to work commitments was unable to attend.

**24. Declarations of interest**

Members and Officers were reminded to make any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or personal and or prejudicial interests that they might have in relation to items on the Agenda. The standing declarations were noted and no further declarations were made.

**25. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **26. Chair's Report and Urgent Items**

There were none.

## **27. Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present, and no representations were made. Councillor Tandy was in attendance in the public gallery.

## **28. Officers Reports**

### **28.1. Absence Monitoring Report**

Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which detailed the staff absence records for the full years 2017 to 2023 and quarters 1 to 3 for 2023 to 2024.

#### **It was resolved that:**

The report be noted.

### **28.2. Staffing Update**

28.2.1. Members received a report, previously circulated, which set out updates to staffing including a copy of the staff structure chart for Members to note. In addition, the Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Caretaker Cleaner at Southfields Jubilee Centre (SJC) had left the organisation. Work was being covered by the recently appointed Caretaker Cleaner for K2 whilst we waited for that building to be handed over to the Town Council. Recruitment for the SJC post was to begin shortly. The Caretaker Supervisor would shortly be retiring, and managers were reviewing how their work would be covered.

28.2.2. Noting the departure of the Events and Town Centre Strategy Manager the Committee enquired as to whether exit interviews were conducted. The Town Clerk confirmed all staff were offered an exit interview as these can be a valuable tool for both the organisation and the employee, and that in this instance a useful and positive interview was held.

28.2.3. Noting the changes to the Events and Communications team it was requested that the job descriptions for that section be shared with the Committee. The Town Clerk reminded Members that all job descriptions, structure charts, and the roles and responsibilities diagrams had been shared with all Councillors on Microsoft OneDrive prior to the induction session in November 2023 and these were still available for Councillors to access. The Town Clerk agreed to share again the job descriptions for that section and confirmed that they were always happy to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the staffing team with Members.

**It was resolved that:**

The updates and the report be noted.

**28.3. Premises Update**

28.3.1. The Town Clerk provided an oral update on a variety of matters related to Town Council properties. The first update was regarding Southfields Jubilee Centre and the repurposing of an unused corridor into a storage cupboard which would facilitate hirers during the day in the small hall as they would be able to access table and chairs without disturbing any hirer in the main hall.

28.3.2. The Town Clerk reported that the lift at the Manor House had broken down. The lift itself was now obsolete and a full report on the part that needed to be replaced was awaited. Estimates so far had ranged from £20,000 to £60,000. Officers were working with the lift maintenance company and the manufacturer to source parts. This did impact upon a wedding hire and officers sought alternative options in consultation with the couple and the wedding was able to go ahead. It was estimated that sourcing the part and repair work could take a couple of months. Officers were looking to relocate bookings and meetings where required and this included Council meetings which were being relocated to Southfields Jubilee Centre. Members requested that the report on the lift fault be shared with the committee when it was available.

28.3.3. The Town Clerk reported that the leaks outside the Mayor's Parlour had been successfully repaired and officers were looking at carpet replacement in this area. Carpet replacement was also required in the entrance to the New Millenium Chamber and the Events Team office due to excessive wearing.

28.3.4. With regards to the K2 Centre, the Town Clerk reported that the Council was still in the handover phase with the work that needed to be done to achieve progression on the sign off of the building. There was a delay in the handover and therefore planned events and meetings at K2 would need to be reviewed. Members asked to be kept informed of progress.

**It was resolved that:**

The oral report be noted.

**29. Finance**

**29.1. Committee Budget Monitor**

Members had before them a report, previously circulated, which highlighted significant variances from budget in Income and Expenditure relating to the Property and Personnel Committee budget for 2023 to 2024.

**It was resolved that:**

1. £10,000 underspend in the staffing budget be earmarked at year end to provide temporary staffing to cover absences due to vacancies.
2. The report be noted.

**30. Exempt Business**

**It was resolved that:**

The public and accredited representatives of the press be excluded from the Meeting under Section 100 Local Government Act 1972 due to the confidential nature of the business to be conducted. This item was confidential for Members of the Council only in accordance with Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, being information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

**31. Officers Exempt Report**

**31.1 Staffing Update**

31.1.1. The Town Clerk provided an oral update on a variety of matters related to staffing.

31.1.2. It was reported that a personnel process had been undertaken in accordance with the Council's policies and had now fully concluded.

31.1.3. The Town Clerk discussed the current vacancies and upcoming changes to staffing, along with the significant workloads and major projects and initiatives needing to be delivered in 2024. This included a review of the events programme, completion of K2, work on the new centre in Hampton Park and delivery of the Allotment Strategy.

31.1.4. Discussing the additional work required to support and develop apprentices, it was noted that this included working with the apprenticeship provider to ensure that apprentices were fully supported. In view of the impending staffing changes and significant workloads it was considered prudent that the Town Clerk had flexibility and was able to exercise the authority delegated to her to make minor adjustments to staffing to provide cover as an interim measure. This included offering those apprentices whose apprenticeships were due to come to an end in the summer fixed term contracts as clerical assistants at least until the end of September.

31.4.5. Managers were also looking at how support can be given to different teams to help with vacancies and key areas of work. Where there was not capacity within existing resources, officers were looking to outsource pieces of work where possible. An example of this was the much-needed review of policies, as set out in the business plan.

31.4.6. Alongside these interim measures, as set out in the Business Plan, given the expanding portfolio and ambitious plans of the Council, along with changes to the operating environment, the Council would need to review its resources to ensure suitable provision was in place to deliver services, projects, and initiatives.

**It was resolved that:**

1. The staffing structure be amended temporarily to include two fixed term contract clerical assistants.
2. The report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7:14 pm.

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**Chair**