

Minutes of a meeting of the Property and Personnel Committee held in The New Millennium Chamber, The Manor House, Church Street, Littlehampton, BN17 5EW on Monday 2 September 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor May - Chair
Councillor Butcher
Councillor Northeast
Councillor Daws
Councillor Tilbrook

Attendance:

Laura Chrysostomou – Town Clerk
Jon Short – Deputy Town Clerk
Juliet Harris – Assistant Town Clerk

2024 to 2025

12. Evacuation Procedures

The evacuation procedures were noted.

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

The procedures were noted.

14. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillor O'Neill, and Councillor Daws attended as a substitute.

15. 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.

16. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2024 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

17. Chair's Report and Urgent Items

There were none.

18. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present, and no representations were made.

19. Officers Reports

19.1. Standing Orders / Urgent Action

The Committee received, previously circulated, an urgent action which set up a member led task and finish group comprised of representatives from the Committee as well as the Policy and Finance and Governance and Audit committees to review the Town Council's GDPR and Governance policies.

It was resolved that:

The Urgent Action be noted.

19.2. Absence Monitoring

Members had before them a report, previously circulated, highlighting staff absence records for the full years 2017 to 2018 to 2023 to 2024 and quarter 1 for 2024 to 2025.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

19.3 Staffing Update

- 19.3.1. The Committee considered a report, previously circulated, which set out updates on the current staff structure including current temporary staff arrangements, and recent and proposed recruitment activities. The Town Clerk explained how some of the current staffing arrangements were providing temporary cover to backfill posts covering long term absence and apprenticeships being completed. Observing that the Council had a team with transferable skills and a good understanding of the organisation, she added that this had been key to officers being able to continue work on delivering the priorities of the Council. This flexibility had also been supplemented by the use

of temporary recruitments to cover specific projects identified in the business plan as well as absences and vacancies.

- 19.3.2. At the same time, it has highlighted both the expanding portfolio of work and the need to review capacity. It was noted that this had been anticipated and was an objective in the Town Council's Business Plan. The Town Clerk confirmed that this review would include investigating how the organisation delivered apprenticeships.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

19.4 Training Update

- 19.4.1. The Committee considered a report, previously circulated, which set out the Town Council's emerging Staff Training Plan for 2024 to 2025. The Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) provided clarification regarding training that was mandatory and personal development identified through appraisals and reviews. It was also noted that the policy review work had identified that further training would be needed as policies were updated.

- 19.4.2. Members questioned whether the awareness training relating to handling asbestos was sufficient. In response the DTC explained the procedures that were in place for the handling and removal of asbestos. It was noted that a contractor who was licensed to manage asbestos was always used for the removal and that the awareness training ensured staff could manage the initial process with minimum risk. It was also noted that some of the health and safety training provided to staff was necessary to ensure they could use maintenance equipment competently and safely. The DTC confirmed that contractors who carried out specific maintenance work that could not be done in house were required to supply their own risk assessment method statements (RAMS) before carrying out works.

- 19.4.3. Finally, whilst noting the lone working requirements for particular officers, it was explained that all new staff were required to complete the training for awareness. In noting the report, it was agreed that future reporting would include clarity regarding training requirements and progress.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

19.5 Property, facilities and equipment Update

- 19.5.1. Members had before them a report previously circulated providing an update on property matters, existing and proposed, under the remit of the Committee. Observing that the war memorial maintenance contract was due for review, it

was noted that there was a local business that may be able to carry out this work. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that details of the tender would be shared with them when it was launched.

19.5.2. K2 Youth and Community Centre

The Chair was pleased to report that the building would be handed over to the Town Council imminently. The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that all works remained under the umbrella of the main construction contract in accordance with the decision made by Council in June. This provided the Council with protection through warranties from both the main contractor and subcontractors and product guarantees that also provided cover and a means of seeking redress should there be a dispute or product failure. It was also noted that under the construction contract the Town Council would be retaining a percentage of the construction costs for a further year after completion as cover against defects.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

19.6 Quarterly Business Plan Progress Report

19.6.1. Members had before them the previously circulated Quarterly Business Plan Progress Report. This report provided an update on progress with delivering the goals as they related to the work of the committee. The review of the Town Council's policies had been prioritised and a major piece of this work was the review of the suite of Human Resources policies of which there were a significant number. In view of this and because this suite of policies were solely within the remit of the Committee it was proposed that the Committee formed a separate Task and Finish group to focus on this suite of policies.

19.6.2. The Town Clerk explained that the work would be led by her and the Deputy Town Clerk and that there would also be an officer group formed to engage employees in the review process. The Task and Finish Group would report directly to this Committee and comprise four Councillors and a draft Terms of Reference had been circulated for approval.

19.6.3. Members reviewed the draft terms of reference and had no comments. There were four nominations for the Task and Finish Group, Councillors Butcher, May, and Tilbrook and it was proposed that the Chair of the committee also chaired the Group. Councillor O'Neill was also nominated and as he was absent it was noted that this would be confirmed with him outside of the meeting.

It was therefore resolved that:

1. Councillors Butcher, May, O'Neill, subject to confirmation, and Tilbrook be appointed to the Human Resources Policy Review Task and Finish Group with Councillor May as Chair.

2. The terms of reference of the Human Resources Policy Review Task and Finish Group be approved.
3. The contents of the report be otherwise noted.

20. Finance

20.1. Committee Budget Monitor

Members had before them a report previously circulated highlighting significant variances from budget in income and expenditure relating to the Property and Personnel Committee budget for 2024 to 2025. Regarding the salaries it was noted that the local government pay award for 2024 to 2025 had yet to be confirmed.

It was resolved that:

The report be noted.

21. Exempt Business

There was none.

The meeting was closed at 7:09pm.

Chair