



Minutes of the Meeting of the Confidential Town Council Staffing Committee held at 10:00 on Thursday 12 December 2024 in the Office of Corfe Mullen Village Hall

Present: **Councillors**
P Purvis (Chair)
S Florek
P Holland
S Jefferies
D Sowry-House

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

SS 24/19 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

There were no apologies for absence received. All members were present.

SS 24/20 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 24/21 Paper A - To Approve minutes of the Extra-ordinary meeting held on 19 November 2024 LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2024 were **APPROVED**.

SS 24/22 Paper B - To Review Staffing Committee Terms of Reference

The Clerk presented the report, noting the tracked amendments for consideration related to scheduled committee meeting dates and the recruitment process for new employees overseen by the Committee.

Members felt the suggested amendments documented and reflected what happens in practice and ensured the Committee was involved in the recruitment of staff.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to approve and adopt the updated Staffing Committee Terms of Reference.

SS 24/23 Paper C – To Review Staffing Committee Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk presented the report, noting the tracked amendments were in line with the updates to the Terms of Reference.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to approve and adopt the updated Scheme of Delegation for the Staffing Committee.

SS 24/24 Paper D – To Review Recruitment Process for Town Council Staff

The Clerk presented the report, noting the Council must ensure HR policies in place are open and transparent should any employment issues/tribunals arise against the Council. An example of the recruitment process recently followed for the Community Engagement and Project Officer role was shown in the appendices of the report.

Members felt consideration should be given to the following updates:

- Location of interviews to present a professional approach to potential candidates.
- Number on the interview board to be proportionate to the role.
- Existing teams' involvement in the tasks as part of the interview process.
- Tasks and interview questions proportionate to the role.
- Task and/or question(s) to be given to potential candidates ahead of their interview dependant on the role.

It was **RESOLVED** for the Clerk to make amendments to present and recommend to Full Council to approve and adopt the recruitment process to be followed for all new employees.

SS 24/25 Paper E – To Note Clerk's Annual Appraisal

The Chair of the Council, Cllr Sowry-House provided a summary of the discussions taken place with the Clerk as part of her annual appraisal on 9 December 2024. Main topics of discussion included the frustrations with the length of time taken to progress projects, the Councils commitment to training all its staff, the enhanced office team and the priorities for the forthcoming year including the relaunch of the Neighbourhood Plan and the redevelopment of the Sports Pavilion and Recreation Ground.

Discussion took place relating to the importance of training for all staff and councillors, noting the training provided by Dorset Council to new Ward Councillors was exceptional and whether this training could be rolled out for Town & Parish Councils. This was being followed up by Cllr Sowry-House in his role as Dorset Council Ward Councillor.

The Clerk provided an update on a recent Society of Local Clerks (SLCC) Dorset Branch meeting attended on 11 December 2024, whereby discussions took place relating to 'working together' with Dorset Council, particularly officers and the breadth of knowledge in Town and Parish Councils across Dorset which should be utilised by Dorset Council for the good of all communities in Dorset. The Clerk noted her frustrations with contacting Dorset Council Officers and lack of responses and/or feedback received, albeit the office had a good working relationship with the Dorset Council Community Highways Officer.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the Clerks Annual Appraisal for 2024.

SS 24/26 Paper F – To Review Job Description & Specification for the Community Engagement & Project Officer

The Clerk presented the report, noting following the recent interviews for the role in November 2024, the tracked amendments reflected discussions and feedback of the Interview Board.

Members felt consideration should be given to the following updates:

- Job title to be updated to Project and Community Engagement Officer to reflect the key part of the role.
- More emphasis on working alongside external consultants and contractors to ensure their work met the needs of the Council by acting as a conduit between the officers, the Council and consultants.
- Element of customer services skills as the role was customer facing.
- Job specification in terms of local authority/public sector knowledge and experience to move from essential to desirable skills in order not to limit applicants.
- Job specification education/training to state degree level, higher education or Prince 2 Project Management qualification or equivalent.
- Include interview question relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Candidates invited for interview to be given task ahead of interview.

Members discussed the key stakeholders for the project and the importance of the officer role to engage across the whole community and to think dynamically on how this can be achieved.

It was **RESOLVED** for the Clerk to make amendments to present and recommend to Full Council for approval to readvertise the role in the new year.

SS 24/27 Verbal – To Note General Staffing Update

The Clerk presented a staffing update as follows:

- Rachel Virrill had moved from her role as Deputy Clerk into her new part time role as Senior Administrator with effect from 1 December 2024. The key parts of the new role were to support the charities to which the Council act as Sole Trustee, particularly the Village Hall and Youth Trust.
- Daryl Pearce, Deputy Clerk had worked hard with the Grounds Team to ensure their policies and procedures were up to date, with essential training underway. However, the focus was now on the governance of the Town Council. It was anticipated his iLCA qualification would be progressed in the new year.
- Grounds Team were working well to ensure all Town Councils were maintained to a high standard, with positive feedback received from residents and users of facilities.

Members felt the teams had come a long way, particularly the Grounds Team who took pride in their work to ensure Council sites looked their best and welcoming to visitors, which was reflected in the feedback received from residents. The enhanced office team would now be able to focus more on the Councils projects and initiatives alongside business as usual.

The update was **NOTED**.

SS 24/28 Matters for Forthcoming Agendas No decisions can be taken¹

The Clerk noted the advertisement for the Project and Community Engagement Officer role would be placed mid-January 2025 for 4 weeks on the Town Council and Dorset Council job vacancies websites along with Indeed, with interviews anticipated late February 2025. Members noted their availability in February and March 2025 to be part of the Interview Board.

Updates on the recruitment of the Project and Community Engagement Officer role to be provided at the next meeting.

SS 24/29 To Agree a date and time for the next meeting – Thursday 13 February 2025 at 10:00 in the Office, Corfe Mullen Village Hall, Towers Way, Corfe Mullen.

SS 24/30 Meeting closed at 11.15.

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

DRAFT

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)