

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Held on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024 at 7.00pm

**PRESENT:** Cllr Rae Frederick – Town Mayor  
Cllr Philip Day – Deputy Mayor (*until 8.20pm*)  
Cllr Mary DeBoos – Chair of Policy and Finance Committee  
Cllr John Haywood - Chair  
Cllr Peter Kelleher  
Cllr James Swyer

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk  
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk  
Cllr Andy Briers  
Cllr Gareth DeBoos  
Cllr Janet Georgiou  
Cllr Michael Thierry

**ABSENT:** Cllr Glenys Turner

### **S/0115 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were recorded from Cllr Turner.

### **S/0116 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests were declared.

### **S/0117 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **S/0118 LIVING WAGE UPDATE**

Members received a verbal report from the Town Clerk on recent developments regarding the real living wage and the Council's status as a Living Wage Employer.

It was noted that the Living Wage Foundation offered two additional accreditations – Living Hours (providing security of hours) and Living Pension (providing stability and security for workers now and in the future). It was not intended to pursue either accreditation at the current time.

The Living Wage rates for 2024-25 are due to be announced next week and employers will then have 6 months to implement them. It was expected that the increase would be 5%, taking the hourly rate to £12.60. The impact of this on pay scales will not be known until the Local Government Pay Agreement is settled. Over time, it could be that the differentials between roles are eroded to such an extent that a review of salaries may need to be undertaken at some stage in the future.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk's verbal report be noted.

**S/0119**  
**REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT-RELATED POLICIES**

Members considered the following:

- (a) Recruitment Policy – attached as Annex A
  - (b) Training Policy (Councillors) – attached as Annex B
  - (c) Training Policy (Staff) – attached as Annex C
- (Noted – Annex B & C replace the current Training Policy)

It was noted that the proposed Recruitment Policy, which had been reviewed by the Council's HR advisors, expressly allows for vacancies to be advertised internally only in the first instance.

**RESOLVED:** That the Recruitment Policy, Training Policy (Councillors) and Training Policy (Staff) be adopted.

<b>ACTION C Wilkins</b>
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**S/0120**  
**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Town Clerk explained that he needed to present a verbal report on personnel management issues which, being of a confidential nature, would be prejudicial to the public interest to consider in the presence of the press or public.

**RESOLVED:** That, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**S/0121**  
**PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT MATTERS**

Members received a verbal report from the Town Clerk on confidential personnel management matters and considered succession arrangements for sundry managerial roles (see *Confidential Minutes – Annex D*).

**RESOLVED:** 1) That the Town Clerk's verbal report be noted.  
2) That the selection panel for the role of Grounds Manager be comprised of the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk.

**RECOMMENDED:** 1) That the selection panel for the role of Finance Manager be comprised of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Chair of Policy & Finance Committee plus 2 additional councillors to be appointed by Full Council.  
2) That a Task and Finish Group be formed to conduct a review of the organisation, looking at structure, roles, nature of work, skills required and prioritising roles to be filled.

<b>ACTION C Wilkins</b>
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There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.44pm.

**Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.**

*RECEIVED*  
*30<sup>th</sup> October 2024*

*APPROVED*  
*12<sup>th</sup> March 2025*

*TOWN MAYOR*

*COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN*

# RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

## Recruitment Policy & Procedure

### Policy Statement

The Council will always seek to recruit the person most suited to the job in question, irrespective of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership or Pregnancy and Maternity (together referred to from now on in this policy as "Protected Characteristics").

Those involved in the recruitment process must be aware of this Policy and the Council's data protection policies. Any questions about these should be addressed to the Town Clerk

This Policy applies equally to promotions.

Candidates for recruitment and/or promotions may be sought internally, in the first instance.

### Recruitment Procedure

When a post becomes vacant an accurate job description should be drawn up before the job is advertised. No unnecessary duties should be included. Person specifications should cover the qualities essential to the post and (if relevant) any further qualities that are judged desirable. Unnecessary physical or language requirements should be avoided. The value of skills gained through non-traditional work such as voluntary work should be considered. Competence gained through experience should be weighed fairly with that gained through more formal routes.

Both the job description and the person specification should be checked with the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk to ensure compliance with this policy and any other relevant policies including the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Recruitment to the posts of Town Clerk and Finance Manager will be closely supervised by the Staffing Committee which must be asked to approve the job description and person specification and specify the composition of the panel which will select applicants for interview (and any short-list) and conduct the interviews. For all other managerial posts the Staffing Committee must be asked to approve the job description and person specification.

All positions should be advertised but, in the case of managerial roles only, this advertising may be restricted to internal candidates only in the first instance where approved by the Town Clerk or the Staffing Committee. Advertisements must be gender neutral (save where gender is a genuine occupational qualification for the position). All adverts should make it clear that the Council will not discriminate on the grounds of any of the Protected Characteristics. Vacancies and promotion opportunities may be advertised to existing staff but care must be taken to ensure that such a process does not exclude categories of workers based upon any Protected Characteristic (for example, staff who are absent on leave must be included). Any application forms must be gender and race neutral.

The vacancy should be advertised so as to promote equal opportunities. Which may mean advertising internally and externally at the same time. Media should be used that reaches all parts of the community. Where recruiting agencies are used they should operate to the same standards as the Council and comply with the Council's policies.

Where information is collected for equal opportunities monitoring purposes it should be in a form which ensures anonymity.

All applications should be acknowledged and interviews be arranged as soon as possible. Any decision to interview or short-list applicants must not be based upon a Protected Characteristic or trade union membership or activities. These decisions will be made by a selection panel appropriate to the type of role as agreed by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

All applicants who are invited to an interview must be informed as soon as possible where and when the interview will take place. Applicants who have stated that they suffer from a disability should be asked whether any reasonable adjustment is required to assist them in attending the interview (which may involve, for example, changing the time of the interview or providing transport where it is reasonable to do so).

The interview process must be carried out in a way which cannot lead to any inference of direct or indirect discrimination. Selection requirements or conditions must be justified and relate to the needs of the position. (For example, a numeracy test may not be appropriate where it does not relate to the requirements of the job) and qualifications should not be required where they are unrelated to the position. Care must be taken not to ask questions which may indicate discriminatory stereotyping and it is preferable to have agreed questions that have been approved by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

Criminal offences should not be in themselves a reason for debarring an applicant from equal treatment in recruitment and selection processes where the offence is irrelevant to the vacancy applied for. The only consideration should be whether the offence is one that makes the applicant unsuitable for the type of work. (For further information about how criminal records information will be handled by the Council please refer to the separate Criminal Records Information document in the Council's Employment Handbook.)

Where tests are used, these should be non-discriminatory and should be tests that have been shown to be appropriate to the task.

Once an agreed short-list has been prepared it is preferable for the short-list to be checked by another suitably qualified person and for the applicants on the short-list to be re-interviewed.

At every stage of the process, applicants who have not been successful should be informed in writing as soon as possible.

Records should be kept of the reasons for rejecting/selecting applicants. Reasons for the decision taken by the selection panel should be recorded. Confidential feedback procedures should be available for candidates and they should be made aware of the procedures.

If an applicant requests the reason that he or she has been rejected any reply should be checked with and approved by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.

Once an applicant has been identified as being the person to whom the position is to be offered:

- Care must be taken to ensure that the terms of any offer do not discriminate against the candidate when compared to other persons in the same or similar positions;
- The offer should be in the approved form and subject to conditions (i.e. references, qualifications, the requirement of a driving licence etc.) as set out in the standard offer of appointment for a person in that position or as approved by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk.
- A medical questionnaire may be submitted with the offer letter but must be in the form approved from time to time by the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk and in any case must only require information reasonably required by the Council to enable it to consider what reasonable adjustments (if any) may be required to enable the applicant to take up the post.
- Where a medical examination is considered necessary it is essential that the candidate is advised that any offer is subject to a satisfactory medical examination.
- It is necessary that the candidate is advised of the documentation that will be applicable to their employment before they commence employment and has signified agreement in writing to those documents that are incorporated (i.e. The Letter of Appointment, Contract of Employment, Service or Manual and Policies that are applicable).
- Where references are required or the position is subject to the candidate achieving a qualification it must be made clear in writing that the position is subject to satisfactory references or the qualification. This is particularly so where the candidate is to commence work before receipt of references or the qualification.

It is necessary in the case of all applicants to ensure that they are qualified to work in the United Kingdom by production of the appropriate documents.

Candidates who are subject to a probationary period should be informed of the Council procedure in this respect. In the case of internal promotions candidates should be informed of any probationary period and what will happen if they are unsuccessful in the new position.

The appropriate induction process set out in the Council's separate Induction Procedures document (contained in the Employment Handbook) shall be followed for all new employees and for existing members of staff appointed to new roles, where relevant.

If there any queries about this procedure they should be directed to the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk.

Adopted: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024

# RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

## Councillors' Training Policy

### Policy Statement

Ringwood Town Council ("the Council") recognises the important contribution that training makes to encouraging effective engagement by all councillors in Council business, the quality of debate and decision-making at meetings and ensuring that councillors are willing to put themselves forward to chair the Council and its committees, sub-committees and working parties. The Council will continue to encourage members to undertake training appropriate to their circumstances, interests, skills and abilities. To this end, advice and assistance on training will be given to councillors.

### Policy Objective

The training policy refers to all councillors and seeks to:-

- (a) provide induction training for new councillors;
- (b) ensure that appropriate training is available to enable councillors to achieve effective performance in their roles;
- (c) provide training and development for possible future individual roles and responsibilities and additional activities to be undertaken by the Council;
- (d) provide instruction and training on the Council's operational policies, practices and procedures (where these are relevant to the role of councillor).

### Training Procedure

The Town Clerk will:

1. Ensure that all new councillors are offered induction training
2. Inform all councillors regularly (not less than once every twelve months) about relevant training opportunities;
3. Respond promptly to requests from councillors for information about the availability of training; and
4. (Subject to budgetary constraints) arrange individual training bookings or group sessions as reasonably requested by councillors.

Councillors will regularly assess their training needs and, considering these, submit specific booking requests or suggestions for suitable themes for training sessions to the Town Clerk.

Adopted: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024

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# RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

## Staff Training Policy & Procedure

### Policy Statement

Ringwood Town Council (“the Council”) recognises the important contribution that training makes both to the effective operation and improvement of its services and to the career development of its individual employees. The Council will encourage every employee to undertake training to develop their individual skills and abilities.

To this end a budget will be provided every year and advice and assistance on training will be given to employees and (where relevant) to volunteers.

### Policy Objective

This training policy refers to all employees and seeks to:-

- (a) provide induction training for new staff and volunteers (where appropriate), and for those transferred to new roles;
- (b) ensure that appropriate training is available to enable individuals to achieve effective performance in their roles;
- (c) provide training and development for possible future individual roles and responsibilities and additional activities to be undertaken by the Council; and
- (d) provide information, instruction and training on health and safety matters.

The Council believes that training for staff development can be a form of benefit in kind to employees and is content, in principle, to provide such training even if it may not strictly be necessary to enable the trainee to become more effective immediately in their current role provided it is relevant to their work for the Council.

### Training Procedure

#### 1. Responsibility for managing staff training

The primary responsibility for training rests with management and all managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are trained to achieve effective performance in their current jobs and to provide development training for suitable future roles, responsibilities and activities. Employees are, however, encouraged to consider their training needs and ask for training that they want (especially at their annual review meetings and their intervening 1-2-1 meetings).

The Town Clerk will:

- advise and assist line managers to manage the training activities of those employees whom they manage and
- advise the Finance Manager and the Council on the budget required to meet training needs.

## **2. Training records and planning**

Employee training needs will be managed by individual training plans whenever practicable, but all training undertaken will be recorded. Line managers will review the training provided to determine how training methods can be improved and maximum benefits can be obtained from resources devoted to training.

## **3. Consultation**

In recognising the legitimate interests of employees in training matters, line managers will consult with them on training requirements.

## **4. Approved / Recognised Qualifications**

Applications for post entry training leading to approved qualifications can be made to the Town Clerk. Decisions about whether this can be supported by the Council (fully or in part and potentially subject to repayment, as to which see below) will be made according to the state of the training budget at the time and the relevance of the course to applicants' present and possible future posts. Any necessary textbooks or equipment for which the Council pay full cost, remain the property of the Council and are on loan to the relevant employee only. They must be returned to the Town Clerk on completion of the course. Books required for reference purposes or as optional background reading as recommended by the course organiser may be borrowed from the Council office by arrangement with the Town Clerk.

Employees studying for nationally recognised qualifications may, in certain circumstances, be required to repay training costs. (This will be explained more fully and confirmed in writing at the time when the Council agrees in principle to fund the training provision.)

Adopted: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2024