

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 4th April 2018 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Anne Murphy
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly
Cllr Christopher Treleaven

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk

S/0001

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Treleaven was proposed by Cllr Day and seconded by Cllr Murphy. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED: That Cllr. Christopher Treleaven be appointed Chairman of the Committee.

Cllr. Christopher Treleaven took the Chair.

S/0002

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none; all members being present.

S/0003

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Day declared that he would not participate in any discussions or votes concerning the meetings administrator since she is a personal friend.

The Town Clerk declared a personal financial interest in respect of item S/0005. Members were satisfied that, even so, there was no need for the committee to seek further independent advice on this matter.

S/0004

REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT-RELATED POLICIES

The Town Clerk reported that staff concerns about the current Appraisals Policy had been prompted him to seek advice from Ellis Whittam (the Council's adviser on employment law and human resources management). That firm had offered to review all the Council's employment-related policies and suggest updates to reflect current law and best practice. This offer has been accepted and is likely to result in simpler and clearer versions of the Staff Handbook and Members' Handbook.

Members noted that periodic review of such policies is normal practice among all employers and there is no need for every review and every change to be scrutinized and approved by members. However, it is important that staff are properly consulted and the members are informed about changes in general terms and given the opportunity to see the detail of these if they wish to.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk:

- (i) consult Council staff members about proposed changes to policies which affect their employment before such changes are brought into effect and

- (ii) report to the Policy & Finance Committee when changes are made to such policies and explain how councillors can obtain copies.

ACTION C Wilkins

S/0005

OVERSIGHT OF STAFF PAY AND BENEFITS

The Town Clerk referred Members to the report on the provision of parking clocks to Town Council staff circulated with the agenda (*Annex A*). Members discussed the possibilities of (i) withdrawing this benefit when the current clocks expire or (ii) retaining it for current staff but withdrawing it for future recruits but concluded in both cases that the likely adverse impact on staff morale and goodwill would outweigh the modest saving achieved. However, members felt that this ought to be kept under review since the cost is likely to increase faster than general inflation over time and that in the meantime staff be informed that it is a discretionary concession. Members also felt that the value of the benefit ought to be taken into account when recruiting in future.

The Town Clerk also sought members' views about member oversight of staff pay and benefits generally (especially the awarding of increments and specifying terms on recruitment). Cllr. Day said that members had been advised previously that the automatic awarding of increments is a provision of the Green Book and therefore not amenable to further scrutiny. Members also felt that their direct involvement in the recruitment of the Town Clerk and the involvement of the Policy & Finance Committee in considering recommendations in respect of other recruitment provides a sufficient degree of oversight and control

- RECOMMENDED:**
- (i) That the provision of parking clocks to council staff should continue on the present basis but that staff be informed that this is a discretionary benefit;
 - (ii) That recommendations for the pay and benefits for new staff be subject to approval by the Policy & Finance Committee at each future recruitment but that current arrangements continue in all other respects.

ACTION C Wilkins/J Hurd

S/0006

EQUAL OPPORTUNITES MONITORING

The Town Clerk explained that all applicants for Council jobs are asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Information Form but the anonymised data thus collected is not otherwise collated at present. Advice has been obtained from Ellis Whittam that the Council is not obliged to collect this information but doing so may be useful in defending potential discrimination claims particularly in respect of recruitment. The Town Clerk observed that the data is only likely to be useful in practice if it is collated and preserved in some accessible format.

- RESOLVED:** That Council staff involved in recruitment:
- (i) continue to request equal opportunities monitoring information (in a suitable format) from all job applicants; and
 - (ii) give thought to how that information received in response can best be collated or preserved to ensure that it is useful in practice.

ACTION C Wilkins/J Hurd

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 6.55pm.

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

RECEIVED
25th April 2018

APPROVED

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

STAFFING PANEL

Report on Provision of Parking Clocks to Town Council Staff

1. This began in or about May 2012 following a resolution made at Policy & Finance Committee in private session on 18th April 2012 “[t]hat all staff based at Ringwood Gateway be provided with parking permits appropriate to the time in which they would be working in the new offices”¹
2. The Information Officers were also issued with parking clocks free of charge from 2012 by New Forest District Council (which employed them at the time) and this continued after their TUPE transfer to RTC.
3. Parking clocks are currently issued free of charge to the Grounds Foreman (for use when visiting the office – short stay only), the **Caretaker/Cleaner** (short stay only) and **all three Information Officers**, the Office Manager, the Administrator/PA, the *Town Clerk*, the Deputy Town Clerk, the *Finance Manager*, the Finance Assistant and the *Meetings Administrator* (all long stay). The present holders of the posts - in **bold** transferred to TC employment under TUPE after the move from Greenways – in *italics* were recruited since the move from Greenways.
4. Annual clock costs are currently: short stay - £25 and long stay - £120 (inc. VAT). The total cost of staff parking clocks in 2017-18 to date is £1,062.49 (exc. VAT); this is not expected to change.
5. There is no mention of the benefit in any staff contracts or formal recruitment literature. The only papers on file are the receipts which employees are required to sign (in which they promise to return the clocks if they leave the council’s employ during their currency). The benefit is therefore likely to be “non-contractual” (with the result that the council is theoretically free to modify or withdraw it) but there remains the possibility that it has become contractual (in some cases at least) either by implication through custom and use or by virtue of TUPE.

For further information, contact:

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¹ There is no obvious reason why this part of the decision then made was treated as confidential then or should remain so now.