

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held virtually via Zoom on Monday 11th January 2021 at 7:30pm

Present: Cllrs P Aldis, P Blaine, W Jackson, A M Hill (Chair), C Osborne, M Pettitt, and S Sutton

In attendance: Cllr S. Paterson, Mr C Robson (Clerk)

	<u>Action</u>
<p>1 Apologies for absence (HR-14-2020/21) No apologies were received.</p>	
<p>2 Declarations of interest (HR-15-2020/21) i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - none</i> ii) <i>Non-disclosable Interests - none</i></p>	
<p>3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (HR-16-2020/21) RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources committee held on Monday 12th October 2020 and to confirm them as a correct record of proceedings subject to the following correction;</p> <p>Change 20/21 to 21/22 under item 9, the mobile phone contract.</p>	Admin
<p>4 Public Participation Session (HR-17-2020/21) No members of the public were present, and no questions had been received.</p>	
<p>5 Health and Safety/Accident Report (HR-18-2020/21) It was noted that there had been no accidents of health and safety issues since the last meeting of the Committee.</p>	
<p>6 Training (HR-19-2020/21) Members received and noted a report on training undertaken. It was noted that despite the pandemic training was still being undertaken.</p> <p>A Member asked if he would be able to attend the BATPC 'Brush up on meetings' training. It was agreed that this should be open to any Member who wished to attend and the Clerk would circulate the BATPC training programme to all Members.</p> <p>Cllr Paterson informed the committee that he had advised the Clerk of dates he could attend the BATPC new councillor training.</p>	Admin
<p>7 COVID19 (HR-20-2020/21) Members received a report on the Council's operations during the current pandemic restrictions. The Clerk informed Members that the</p>	

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Council's caretaker required some additional PPE for cleaning the toilets, which can currently remain open. The situation continues to be monitored as guidance changes. Fishing, which was originally prohibited during the lockdown is now permitted and as such, some advisory signs will be erected at the entrance to The Riddy. Signage will advise the public that a permit must be held to fish on The Riddy and should only be done locally during the lockdown.

A Member asked about Central Bedfordshire's mortality plan. The Clerk confirmed that he was submitting burial data twice a week and received back weekly summaries of the area. There was no pressure on the system at present and there was not a need for the group to return to its weekly meetings at this stage.

It was noted that COVID marshals from CBC would be visible in the community to help remind residents of the current rules. It was not felt that the marshals would have a direct impact on STC's operations during the lockdown. However, information should be shared with the public on what steps they should take if they are concerned lockdown rules are being broken.

8 Employee Handbook (HR-21-2020/21)

Members received and considered the following Human Resources policies which form part of the Council's Employee Handbook;

- i) Members reviewed the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. It was noted that the following amendments were required;
 - Change 'open' to 'transparent' in section 1.2
 - Change references of 'Director' and 'HR Department'.
 - Deletion of 'years' in section 1.37
 - Clarification on the implications of section 1.9, that the procedure is non-contractual and the protection this gives the employer.
 - Clarification on how any disciplinary of the Clerk will be dealt with by the policy, specifically in regards to line management.

Agreed to amend the policy and bring back to the committee for further review.

Town Clerk

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ii) **RESOLVED** to approve the Grievance Policy subject to;

- Amending references to 'Director' to 'Town Clerk'.
- Referencing the Whistle Blowing Policy under 3.1.2
- Use '5 working days' for sections requiring times.

Cllr Osborne left the meeting.

iii) **RESOLVED** to approve the Equal opportunities Policy

iv) **RESOLVED** to approve the Harassment Policy.

v) **RESOLVED** to approve the Equal Pay Policy subject to amending the numbering which was out of order.

vi) **RESOLVED** to approve the Dignity at Work Policy

9 Chairman's Items (HR-22-2020/21)

There were no Chairman's items.

10 Date of Next Meeting (HR-23-2020/21)

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 22nd March 2021.

11 COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION (HR-24-2020/21)

Exclusion of the Public and Press

It was proposed and agreed that in terms of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, proposed and agreed that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

12 Staffing Matters (HR-25-2020/21)

i) Members received and noted employee sick leave figures for the financial year to date.

ii) Members received and noted a report on a long-term sick leave matter.

iii) The Clerk left the meeting for this agenda item, which referred in part to the Clerk. Members received and discussed a report from Cllr M Hill, Chairman of the Human Resources Committee.

In the absence of the clerk notes were taken by the Chair:

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Members spoke on the report and were all wholly supportive of the recommendation and spoke warmly about the clerk's commitment , capacity for hard work, quality of reports for councillors and especially his management of the Council and its staff throughout the period of the pandemic.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations within the report and that the clerk move up one salary scale point, backdated to April in line with the pay range set out in the Clerk's contract.

Moving the clerk up by one point will put him at the top of the range to which he was appointed. Members felt it was important for the HR committee to explore in the near future the implications for both the clerk and all our staff of a move into a higher scale. The Chair commented that backdating of pay increases was a common practice and that budget planning should allow for some increases.

Concerns were expressed about the fact the outdoor team has been under strength for so long and members would not like this to be prolonged into the spring and summer. One member asked if we might not temporarily employ someone from a neighbouring council who had been furloughed?

Members were agreed that the impact of the past twelve months on our staff teams in terms of social interaction etc. was impossible to gauge at present but the impact would need to be reviewed.