

Minutes of the Meeting of the Staffing Committee held in the Council Chamber of the Guildhall St Ives on Thursday 15 August 2019 at 10.00 am

PRESENT

Chairman – Councillor T Harris

Vice Chairman – Councillor J Griffin (until 11.35am)

COUNCILLORS

Arthur K

R Henry

Glanville R (until 10.19 am)

OFFICER

Town Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None.

ST.28 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman advised of a number of changes to the agenda, including changes in the order of agenda items, and addition of reports due to urgency.

The Chairman also apologised to members for the absence of any supporting reports or papers prior to the meeting. He invited members to consider whether the meeting itself or any agenda items should be deferred to enable decisions to be properly informed by careful reading of papers. Members decided that since they had arranged their time around attendance to the meeting, it was preferable to continue with the meeting albeit that may necessitate deferment of certain items due to the need to re-read paperwork prior to consideration of relevant items.

The Clerk explained that many of the matters included on the agenda were evolving situations and that matters being considered today had been discussed at a lengthy meeting with the council's HR advisor the day before, and had been progressed since then, before update on the current situation at this meeting.

ST.29 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLOR/OFFICER INTERESTS

Councillor Glanville declared an interest in Minutes ST.35 onwards as a Councillor named in a related report at an earlier meeting, a matter still under review, and so withdrew from the meeting during consideration of these items.

ST.30 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was noted that the minutes from the previous meeting had yet to be finalised and so would be approved at the next meeting of this committee.

ST.31 OFFICERS' UPDATE REPORT

It was noted that matters for update were included in the agenda items of this meeting, and so no officer update report was required.

ST.32 UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF STAFFING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

It was noted that there was no update as the priority had been placed on resolving the grievance

currently underway.

ST.33 STAFF APPRAISALS

Having adopted a staff appraisal model on 2 May 2019, the Clerk tabled the appraisal model paperwork in order that Members could consider the various options for the appraisal interview templates and records. There were also questions to be addressed in relation to who would carry out staff appraisals as the adopted model differed to the Council resolution made at the same meeting, and from the Council's Standing Orders. During discussion on this item, Members were concerned that they did not have enough time to read all the paperwork and declined the Clerk's offer to give an overview of the issues to be considered.

It was AGREED – to defer this item until the next meeting of the Staffing Committee, giving time to Members to read the appraisal policy and template appraisal forms in full.

Councillor Glanville left the meeting at this point.

ST.34 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meeting) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item

ST.35 SICKNESS ABSENCE REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS  
(Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3)

The Clerk reported on a matter relating to a member of staff on long-term sickness absence from work. A proposed way forward was explained, and following discussion it was

RESOLVED – that the Clerk be authorised to take line-management decisions which could include any of the options as set out in the verbal report to the committee. Decisions to be made in consultation with an appointed panel of 2 Members, Councillors Griffin and Henry, with the next sickness absence review meeting to be scheduled as soon as possible.

ST.36 UPDATE ON STAFF GRIEVANCE  
(Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3)

Members were updated on a staff grievance which had been resolved. Further matters were discussed, following which it was

RESOLVED – that the decision letter for the staff grievance currently being dealt with would be based on the letter sent on 29 July, updated and with details of the right of appeal to be included. The letter to be sent by the committee chairman on behalf of the Staffing Committee, with wording to be reviewed by the council's HR advisor.

Note, Councillor Arthur was absent from the meeting when the vote on this item was taken.

ST.37 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM A MEMBER OF STAFF:

(Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3)

Councillor Griffin left the meeting shortly after this item started to be discussed, and before the vote was taken and did not return.

A letter from a member of staff was circulated at the meeting, time was allowed for it to be read, followed by discussion on its content and how to respond to it.

RESOLVED – that no action be taken in response to the letter received.

Members then turned their attention to what should be kept on staff files, and it was

RESOLVED – that the member of staff's personnel file would include a copy of the investigation report, a copy of the letter received, and a copy of the letter of response.

With regard to the committee's response, it was

RESOLVED – that there would be no comment about content and that the response would be that the committee was acting in line with the grievance procedure.

ST. 38 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS

(Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3)

The Clerk reported that there had been an information request received, for a copy of the notes of the Staffing Panel, and that advice from CALC was that the council should take HR advice before making a decision. Members noted that the decision would primarily relate to interpretation of the law and the release of information under data protection legislation

RESOLVED – that decision on the information request be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

ST.39 FACILITIES PROJECT MANAGER

(Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3)

The committee was advised that the council had made a decision to appoint a (freelance/contractor) Facilities Project Manager to oversee 4 tasks and that following that decision, HR advice had been received that the Facilities Manager should be consulted before decision taken and actioned, and it was reported that this consultation had then been carried out.

At the consultation, the Facilities Manager had agreed with the proposals for the Library and the Huers Hut but had stated that there was not a time necessity for the work for the Island Chapel or the public toilets (disabled) at West Pier and the Sloop car park.

The Clerk reiterated advice from Neo PM that recruitment of cover for sickness absence in this instance should be led by the Facilities Manager's views, particularly as his return to work was considered imminent, with return to work discussions starting and this cover having the potential to support his return to work.

Discussion points:

- Members' view that there was a huge backlog of work and so the project officer would work to minimise the impact for the Facilities Manager's return.
- Noted that the council decision had not been fully informed as to the need to consult with affected staff in advance due to the chronology of decisions and actions
- Members expressed concern that a member of staff had been asked for their advice whilst on sick leave which was not considered appropriate
- Members considered that this should be a council-led decision, rather than staff-led.
- Members considered that the staffing committee could not overturn a Council decision
- There was scope for the works to be scheduled and prioritised as needed.

RESOLVED – that the consultation response from the Facilities Manager be noted and to implement the council decision in full.

ST.40 PROCESS FOLLOWED – CLERK'S COMMENTS

(Paragraphs 1,2 & 3)

The Clerk apologised that it had not been possible to finish a written report but gave a verbal report on concerns relating to a recent process and potential impact.

The Clerk's views were noted, without Members taking a position on them.

Members AGREED that the letters between the Clerk and the committee chairman be circulated to Councillors Arthur, Griffin, Harris and Henry, for a future meeting.

The Clerk expressed frustration at having tried to raise the concerns on a number of occasions and again stated concerns which the committee was asked to investigate.

ST.41 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The committee agreed that the next meeting would be called when needed.

Meeting closed 1.39pm

Chairman