

PRESENT

Chairman – Councillor K Arthur
Deputy Chairman – Councillor S Hynes

COUNCILLORS

Dale Wells

OFFICERS

Town Clerk

ST.25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Councillor Harris

ST.26 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 25th October 2021.

ST.27 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLOR / OFFICER’S INTEREST

None

ST.28 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – “that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meeting) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters due to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed.

ST.29 TO CONSIDER A REPORT ON CONFIDENTIAL STAFFING MATTERS

The Committee considered a status report on staff sickness. The phased return to work of one staff member was continuing and they were due to return to full time that week and were continuing to be monitored.

A second member of staff on long term sick leave had a not fit note which was due to be reviewed. It was not yet known what the outcome would be.

The Committee noted an on-going grievance process with a member of staff. The process had concluded but the individual concerned had now appealed. In order to maintain separation within the process, the RFO was undertaking all administrative duties in relation to the matter. Dates for an appeal hearing were being scheduled. The Committee did not discuss the details of the matter but did, however explore what the possible outcome of the process might be and any necessary actions for them to progress. Given this, the Committee resolved to ensure that three Councillors were nominated to any future panels.

It was confirmed that the Council was receiving external specialist advice from HR consultants and would be supported by them at all the meetings.

Three temporary staff members remained in post working in the Facilities team. Footpath work had now generally been concluded. However, it was still necessary to retain their services with one member of staff of sick and the other on light duties.

Two temporary contracts were due to end in December. It was critical that there was

greater clarity at that time, so temporary contracts could be extended as necessary. In addition, following the support of the Committee and ratification by Council, it had been possible to secure a funding place for one of the temporary staff as an apprentice. This would result in a financial contribution to the Council of £4,000 and ensure an additional member of the team was available for a longer period.

RESOLVED – that the Committee

- i) Note the report
- ii) Continue to monitor staff sickness
- iii) Await the outcome of the grievance process before determining the timing of the next meeting and next steps
- iv) Review the extension of temporary contracts at the next meeting, once up to date medical information had been received

ST.30 PROPOSALS FOR A REVIEW OF STAFFING

The Clerk circulated a set of documents including staffing structures and draft job descriptions for two new posts and introduced the proposals to the Committee. She summarised discussion at the previous meeting of the Committee and the need for a staffing structure review. She set out again some of the drivers; staff retirement and vacancies, the taking on of additional services and additional ambitions, especially around devolution.

She also summarised the feedback from the Committee at its last meeting, in relation to proposals for each service. This was also set out in the report. The Committee had asked for greater detail for key job roles and also for the impacts to be costed, in order for the costs to be reflected in the budget setting process.

Since then, the Senior Management Team had completed more work on the options and developed job roles. Mindful of the costs of increasing the staffing establishment, they then reviewed scope to utilise savings from vacant posts, introduce grant funding and income streams to offset the overall cost. This resulted in proposals which did see net growth within the staffing establishment but nonetheless, was offset to a significant extent. The Clerk then circulated a detailed staffing budget for consideration with comparative service costs set out. These had been prepared by the RFO.

The Committee discussed the proposals and the main points discussed were as follows:

- Policy development roles under the Town Clerk were self financing – the Committee agreed that the job role information provided more clarity.
- General support for the introduction of an office manager and the job role (with an emphasis on experience rather than qualifications) – the reporting structure needed to be clear
- The weddings officer could sit within an events team in the medium term.
- Two apprentices were welcome and would be partially funded.
- It wasn't possible to be clear about TUPE posts at the moment, so these had been excluded
- It was anticipated that the bar supervisor would be funded in part through income
- The key budget growth was within the LIS team. Given the budget deficits, it was essential to have staff with the right technical skill set to give the Council the best chance of retaining an affordable library service. It was an invest to save proposition.
- The majority of the roles had an exit strategy, should the Council wish to remodel or reduce service delivery later.
- Grades were indicative at this stage, save that the new pay and grading structure was intuitive. It would be necessary for new posts to be evaluated and assess the impact on roles more generally.

The Committee agreed that the next steps would be for the budget implications to be considered as part of the draft budget. In addition, to finalise job roles to ensure they were job evaluated.

Staffing Committee

9 November 2021

The Clerk also set out the case for seeking to introduce some staff changes in the current financial year, especially where there were significant gaps in resources in the Support Services Team, due to staff departures. She requested that, should they be supportive of the changes, they agree that two posts should be advertised within the financial year and, subject to a successful recruitment, they be filled as soon as possible with the initial costs being financed by salary savings and then from general reserves. As an existing permanent post within the structure, there was nothing to prevent the post of weddings officer being advertised.

RESOLVED– that

- i) The post of Weddings, Civic and Events Assistant is advertised as soon as possible
- ii) The Committee RECOMMEND the amended staffing structure, together with the costings, to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, to be included in the draft budget for 2022-23 and that
- iii) The Finance and General Purposes Committee be requested to RECOMMEND to Council that the post of Office Manager be approved as a permanent post in the staffing structure, with the aim of an appointment being made within the current financial year to address resource shortfalls.
- iv) Consultation with staff on the proposed changes is progressed following the approval of the draft budget by Council in December.

ST.31 Date of the Next Meeting

To be agreed

Meeting closed at 18.21pm

Chairman

