

Minutes of the PERSONNEL COMMITTEE of Edenbridge Town Council at Rickards Hall on 02 March 2022, at 2.00 pm.

Present: Cllrs A Baker, M Gemmell Smith, A Layland, N Lloyd, M McArthur (Chairman), S McGregor and B Todd.

In attendance: Town Clerk

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS OR PREDETERMINATION

None.

3. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 October 2021

Resolved: that the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 15 October 2021 be duly signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting; page 9610-9611.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

None.

In view of the confidential nature of the following items to be discussed the Chairman proposed that the press and public be excluded from the Chamber. Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972 s100 and 102

No Members of public were in attendance.

5. DISCUSSION OF PERSONNEL ISSUES

5.1 To receive a report on staff attendance/absence

The Town Clerk's report was received. At the October meeting it was reported since 1 April the total lost working days due to sickness, Covid-19 and compassionate leave was a minimum of 70 days, this had risen to 130 days. Staff had worked from home where possible, to help keep on top of emails and other matters.

5.2 To receive update on other staff matters

Members noted the Deputy Clerk was not yet able to consider her pending retirement.

It was also noted that the appropriate procedures for one attendance issue were being followed and recorded in consultation with the HR consultancy.

5.3 Annual Leave update

All staff had been encouraged to take annual leave and time owed throughout the year. At the March 2021 meeting it was noted that due to the pandemic, staff had not all been able to take their leave and resolved a maximum of 5 days leave to be carried over. This was in line with the Government guidelines for leave not taken during the pandemic and the Staff Handbook. Members noted, the majority of staff had used most of their leave allowance, and

Resolved: to allow staff to carry over up to 5 days leave in to 2022/23. However, they asked that staff make every effort to use all their leave in 2022/23 so that there was not a repeat in 2023/24.

5.4 To note: staff annual appraisals have been completed

The Town Clerk advised that the groundstaff and office staff appraisals had been carried out in January and all exceeded the satisfactory performance benchmark. Members discussed how performance was measured and if the objectives set were monitored during the year. The Town Clerk said that the line managers were responsible to check ongoing performance and raise any issues.

5.5 To receive an update on the Medical Insurance membership and costs

The estimate for medical insurance 2022/23 had been received. The Clerk advised that's the broker had suggested a second quote as there was now a provider (Vitality) with a comparable scheme to the current provider (Aviva). Members unanimously,

Resolved: continuation of the scheme for staff who had been with the Council for 2-years from 1 April or more.

5.6 To receive an update on the staffing budgets 2021/2022 and 2022/23

Members received the Town Clerk's staffing calculations for 2021/22 and 2022/23. It was noted that:

- Employer NI increases from 13.8% to 15.05%
- Private Health premium had come in slightly higher than expected
- Pension increase had already been allowed for but increases from 23% to 23.8%
- The NJC pay award for 2021/22 and 2022/23 was still yet to be confirmed, but 2021/22 was estimated at 1.75%. RPI as of January 2022 was 7.8%
- The approved staffing budget 2022/23 was £380k
- The Deputy Clerk's retirement was unknown

Looking at the summary figures, it was highly probable that staffing could exceed the £380k budgeted if the recruitment for the communications position (which had been put on hold for 2021/22) and the new Market Officer were to proceed.

Members discussed at length; it was noted for 2021/22 there was a forecasted budget saving of £11k which could be moved to staffing reserve rather than general reserve. In 2022/23 the projected overspend with the recruitment was £5,786; this did not allow for any NJC pay award. Committee and Council had already agreed not to reduce existing staffing levels and noted staff were already stretched and working additional hours, unpaid which was not sustainable.

Members concluded unanimously,

Resolved: to make recommendation to full Council to support the agreed staffing budget for 2022/23; and noted that this was likely to exceed budget due to unknown NJC pay award, NI and medical insurances. The budget was to be continued to be monitored

5.7 To consider staffing vacancies and recruitment as considered at the meeting in October, and supported by full Council (October and January meetings)

The Committee had already considered a number of possible staffing scenarios, and had supported the option to allow for:

- Market Officer on a 1-year contract (up to 10 hours pw)
- Communications and Tourism Administration Officer (22 hours pw)

2022/23 budget had allowed for a Communications person 22 hours pw. However, Lindsey had confirmed that she would be willing to continue as Tourism Officer on 1-day per week.

The Town Clerk proposed the following:

- Communications role reduced to 15 hours pw/2 days equivalent
- To maintain the Tourism Officer on 7.5 hours/1-day per week
- This would still provide for Communications and Tourism 22 hours

Recruitment Proposal 2022/23

- To go ahead with the Market Officer (10 hours) on a 1-year contract
- Communications Officer (15 hours) on a 1-year contract
- To advertise the two positions with the option of combining as one role (25 hours)

In view of the budget discussions (item 5.6), Members unanimously,

Resolved: to make recommendation to support the proposal and approve the recruitment for two positions: Market Officer and Communications Officer, both on a one-year contracts (with the viability to continue employment reviewed later in the year). To maintain the tourism officer on 1-day a week.

The meeting closed 15:02