



Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Policy Committee of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Meeting Room - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 2nd August, 2022 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs K Ely, E Hume and E Kelly-Wilson

Absent: Cllr M Imran

Apologies: Cllr G Bedford

In attendance: Delia Shephard (Town Clerk) (Clerk)

Min Ref

EMPC22/23- 1 **Councillors' apologies for absence**
It was RESOLVED to note the apologies and absences as listed above.

EMPC22/23- 2 **Councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**
There were no declarations of interests made by councillors.

EMPC22/23- 3 **Public Speaking**
There were no representations from members of the public.

EMPC22/23- 4 **Exclusion of Public and Press**
It was RESOLVED that members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted which could include discussion of individual employees and circumstances of individual incidents.

EMPC22/23- 5 **Confidential report on health and safety matters**
The Clerk gave a confidential oral report on health and safety matters, noting that there had been no recorded accidents at work amongst staff since the last report and no near misses amongst the staff team.

The annual general health and safety risk assessment visit by WorkNest was scheduled for Monday 8 August 2022 and thereafter individual visits to specific premises would be scheduled for individual assessments. The outcome of these visits and the subsequent reports would be reported to the committee in due course.

Following the outcome of staff appraisals, the staff management team had been giving attention to the safety of lone workers. The lone working fob previously held at NLP had been allocated to the Bookings and Facilities Officer. An additional fob would be needed for the Landscaping Officer in due course as more time was spent out of the office.

Health and Safety arrangements for the recent Big Street Eat had been satisfactory. There had been a small number of minor injuries dealt with by the First Aid providers and one behavioural incident dealt with by security which necessitated calling the police. This took place during the pack up period.

The IOSH Managing Safely qualification was now held by 6 members of staff (though



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update training might be needed for the Town Clerk and EPM) and this had helped with wider awareness of health and safety matters across the whole team.

The clerk expressed concerns about activities undertaken at NLP both inside and outside the building during party bookings. Recently these has included the use of fireworks next to a road, racing of vehicles and introduction of gas cylinders and other unauthorised equipment for cooking etc. It was fortunate that none of these issues had caused serious injury or significant damage to property. The clerk advised that prompt and serious attention be given to further actions to address these issues which were exposing the council to potential financial and reputational damage and presenting risks to all users of the buildings including staff. A further and most important issue was the considerable impact on local residents.

Members discussed the issues noting the differences between different sets of premises and considering the efficacy of the remedial health and safety measures which had already been put in place at Newton Leys eg use of security personnel. It was further noted that management of different aspects of the community buildings fell within different committees (ie Finance and Governance, Community and Employment Policy).

It was RESOLVED to establish a task and finish group to review the operation and business model of Newton Leys Pavilion and all aspects of usage, bookings and conditions of hire. The Group would be chaired by Cllr Kelly-Wilson and would also include the chair of the employment policy committee, the chair of the Finance Committee and the chair of the community committee. (The task and finish group would be supported by the clerk.) Following its review work the task and finish group would make recommendations to full council or to committees as appropriate.

Meanwhile it was agreed to continue with attendance of security personnel at large bookings and to pass on costs to new bookers with effect from 1 August 2022 as previously agreed.

EMPC22/23- 6 **Revised employment handbook**

Members reviewed proposed minor amendments to the employment handbook which made more explicit reference to the Green Book on which the Town Council's contracts were based. It was RESOLVED that the amendments be approved and incorporated into the employment handbook which would be re-dated August 2022 and issued to staff as soon as possible.

EMPC22/23- 7 **Revised model contracts**

Members reviewed proposed minor amendments to the Town Council's model contracts which had been recommended following a review by WorkNest, the Town Council's employment law advisors. It was RESOLVED to approve the proposed additional wording in the section on termination of employment and contractual notice clause 17 "We reserve the right to bring your employment to an end immediately without notice and make a payment to you in lieu of the required notice."

EMPC22/23- 8 **Draft statement of intent on training and development for councillors and employees**

A draft statement of intent on training and development for councillors and employees was discussed. The Clerk noted that this or a similar document was recommended good practice for all town and parish councils and was qualification requirement for the local council award scheme.



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It was RESOLVED that the draft statement be recommended to full council for adoption on 27 September 2022 without revision.

EMPC22/23- 9 **Exclusion of the public and press**

It was RESOLVED that members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following two items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted. These items would include discussion of individual staff performance and details of terms and conditions of employment.

EMPC22/23-10 **Summary report on completion of employee performance reviews**

A confidential report summarising the outcome of the 2022 appraisal process for all members of staff (excluding the clerk whose appraisal had not yet been undertaken) was discussed in some detail. Councillors noted the standard of performance from the staff team which was deemed high in most cases.

Councillors noted the additional work which had been undertaken by those members of staff who had supported the Bletchley Big Street Eat and it was RESOLVED to offer an additional day of holiday to those who had worked on that day to be added to the August Bank Holiday weekend.

EMPC22/23-11 **Confidential Staff Report**

A confidential report examining likely future staffing requirements alongside the council's delivery plan and known aspirations was reviewed and discussed in detail.

i Job Description Updating

It was RESOLVED to update the following job descriptions to reflect current and planned activities and responsibilities

- Environment and Premises Manager
- Projects and Media Officer
- Landscaping Officer
- Bookings and Facilities Officer
- Town Rangers

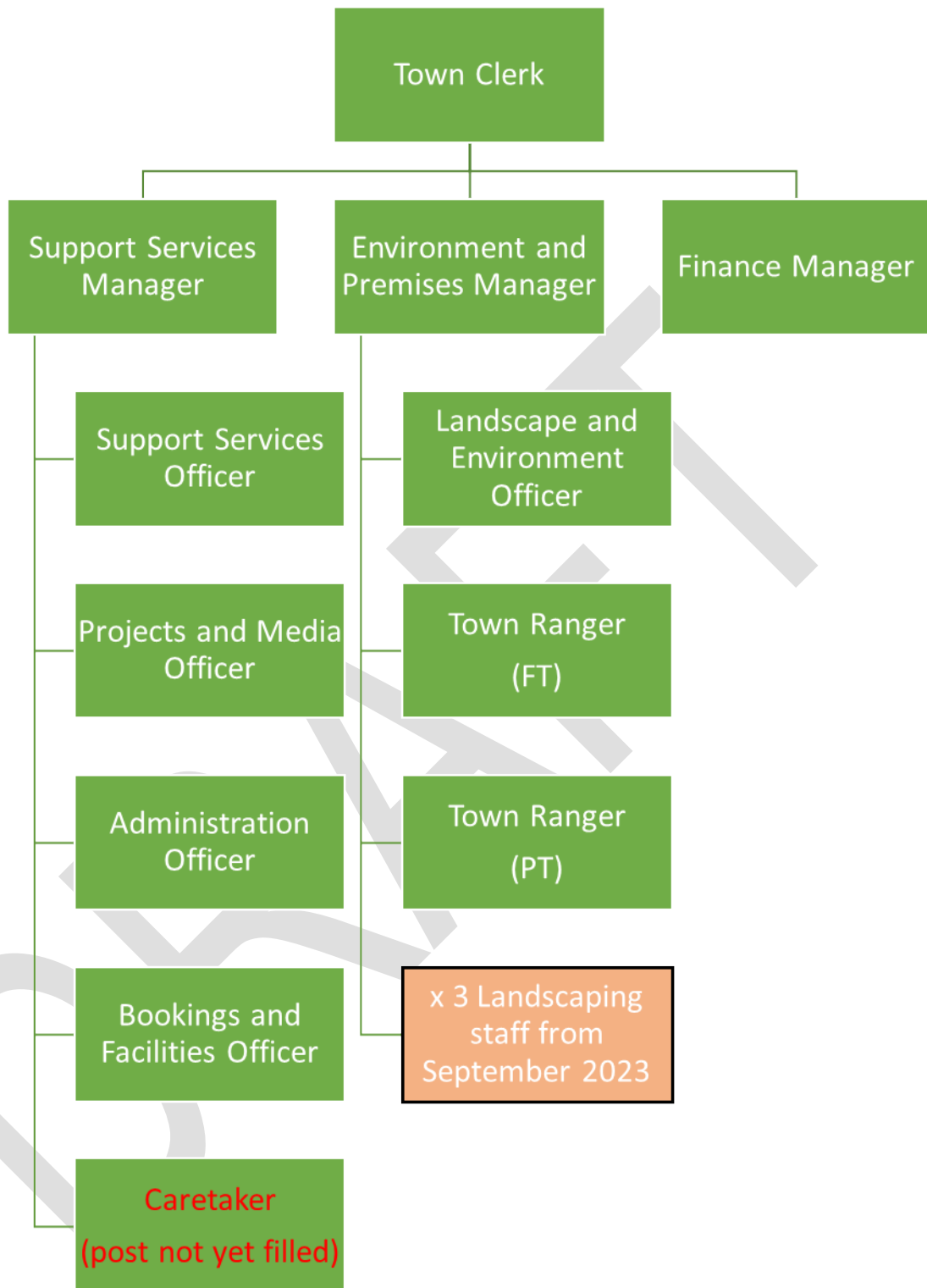
As shown in the documents attached to the agenda.

ii Amendment to Reporting Structure

It was RESOLVED to adjust the staff structure so that the bookings and Facilities Officer and the Caretaker (vacant post) report to the Support Services Manager with immediate effect ready for planned increases to the Environment and Premises Manager's staff team in 2023 and a revised organisation chart was approved as shown below.



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iii Current and future personnel issues

Members noted that facilities and bookings administration would increase once Sycamore Hall was available to let. Meanwhile the Bookings and Facilities Officer was unable to spend sufficient time health and safety responsibilities due to high volume of bookings. It was agreed that further work on a better customer journey through improved software would be explored but that the outcome of the review of NLP could



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also influence this workload. It was further noted that as financial transactions increased the work of the RFO would also increase.

Members noted that the Finance Manager's role was part time and in the event of long-term absence it would be necessary to buy in support from a third party as previously.

Members noted that the Support Services/Community Officer had concentrated on events and community engagement during 2022 due to availability of one-off funding from Milton Keynes Council. If the programme of events were to be repeated in 2023 this would need to be accommodated in the budget.

The confidential report included information about pay, salary levels needed to recruit and retain good quality staff in the last 12 months and likely impact of the cost of living crisis on pay and employment. During discussion two posts were identified as needing pay re-evaluation and a request from another member of staff for pay re-evaluation in the light of changes to a JD was also noted.

The Clerk had reported that the Bucks LGPS fund was due for revaluation in 2022 which could affect employer superannuation contribution rates adversely. Also, the current incomplete pay negotiations between the National Employers and the NJC Trade Unions suggested a pay increase for 2022-2023 which exceeded the Town Council's budgeting for 2022-2023. The report concluded that adding to staff headcount at the present time would have considerable impact (especially as the Town Council was already committed to taking staff under TUPE regulations during 2023). Members agreed with the conclusion of the report that the Council must focus on prudent financial management efficiency savings and productivity improvements rather than recruitment. The Clerk expressed the view that members must consider all proposed new council activities in terms of impact on workload and personnel.

The meeting closed at 9.28 pm