

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 23 OCTOBER 2019

Present

Chairman: Cllr B. Larcombe MBE

Members: Cllr J. Broom, Cllr Miss K. Ellis, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr Ms G. Stammers, Cllr G. Turner

Officers: Mrs A. Mullins (administrative officer), Mr J. Wright (town clerk)

Other members: Cllr L. Howe

Absent: Cllr S. Williams

19/15/HR Public Forum

There were no members of the public present who wished to speak.

19/16/HR Apologies

Cllr J. Scowen – personal commitment

19/17/HR To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 19 June 2019

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2019 were **ADOPTED**.

19/18/HR Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

19/19/HR Dispensations

There were none.

19/20/HR Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Human Resources Committee meeting held on 19 June 2018

Finance manager recruitment

The town clerk said the temporary finance officer had informed him on 14 October 2019 he didn't intend to accept the permanent post of finance manager and his last day would be 25 October 2019. He said there was still a lot of catching up to do in finance and a budget to prepare but officers were trying to bring in extra resources, which included advertising for another

fixed-term finance manager. The rationale for this was the fixed-term post had received a better response than the permanent post during the previous round of recruitment.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis left the room at 7.07pm.

Cllr J. Broom asked if an agency could provide cover and suggested Dorset Council (DC) employees who had been made redundant may be interested in providing cover.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis returned to the meeting at 7.08pm.

The town clerk said agencies had been approached in the past but hadn't been able to fulfil the council's requirements. He said he had spoken to DC and details of the post would be provided to its human resources team when the advert went out.

Members discussed the advertising of the permanent finance manager post and several members felt it should be run in parallel with the temporary post.

The town clerk said he wanted to defer advertising until he had a better understanding of the applications for the temporary post. A short delay also had a better fit with DC's timescales for making redundancies.

The town clerk said the current administrative assistant would spend more time in finance and he intended to temporarily back-fill her role. He said an advert would also be placed for a temporary administrative assistant.

Cllr B. Larcombe said he was concerned about the strain this situation would put on the finance assistant.

The town clerk said he and the deputy town clerk would do some of the higher-level finance functions and he was confident they could produce a budget. He said he was also meeting with someone on 25 October 2019 who had finance experience and may be able to provide some support.

Members agreed the advertisements for the finance roles should be placed in publications up to a 30-mile radius and also via South West Councils.

19/21/HR Update Report

Training award delay

Cllr B. Larcombe asked why Kyle Knight's situation was different to the other two employees, whose issues had been resolved, and when his situation was likely to be resolved.

The operations manager said Kyle Knight had done a different award with a different provider and other awarding bodies were being approached, but it was not clear when it would be resolved.

19/22/HR Staffing Structure Review

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr J. Broom, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential information relating to an individual within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

19/23/HR Christmas and New Year Working Arrangements

The town clerk said the arrangements outlined in the report were the same as the last two years.

Cllr Miss K. Ellis left the meeting at 7.26pm.

Cllr J. Broom suggested the council provided more discretionary leave so the office would re-open on Monday 6 January 2020, instead of Wednesday 2 January 2020 as suggested.

Cllr Miss K. Ellis returned to the meeting at 7.27pm.

It was proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson to apply 1.5 days of discretionary leave from midday to 5pm on Tuesday 24 December and on Friday 27 December 2019; apply statutory leave on Monday 30 December and Tuesday 31 December 2019; agree members of the external works' team provide a full day's cover every day, except Christmas Day; and for members of the external works' team who provide cover to be paid overtime and time-off-in-lieu for the day worked.

This motion was not voted on as an alternative motion was proposed.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to apply 3.5 days of discretionary leave from midday to 5pm on Tuesday 24 December, on Friday 27 December 2019, Thursday 2 January and Friday 3 January 2020; apply statutory leave on Monday 30 December and Tuesday 31 December 2019; agree members of the external works' team provide a full day's cover every day, except Christmas Day; and for members of the external works' team who provide cover to be paid overtime and time-off-in-lieu for the day worked.

19/24/HR Environment Training

Several members were concerned about the level of commitment the council was being asked to give to environmental matters as there was also a long list of proposed environmental objectives, for which the costs and the level of undertaking were still unknown.

Members felt it would be better to wait until those costs and the level of undertaking were known before committing to environment training. They asked how often the course was run and whether it could be completed online to save travel expenses.

The operations manager said the course was run every few months but he would recommend a taught course.

It was proposed by Cllr J. Broom to defer consideration of environment training for members and officers until the budget had been agreed and the cost of the objectives and the level of undertaking was known.

This motion was not seconded.

The operations manager advised investing in this training as the council had declared a climate emergency but no one in the organisation was qualified in this field.

Cllr B. Larcombe suggested DC could give guidance on environmental matters. He was also concerned it was a generalist course and there was no idea of how it would help the council in whatever environmental initiatives it pursued.

Members generally agreed it would be helpful if at least one person in the organisation was able to take the climate emergency initiatives forward, but felt it was too early to consider training until the extent of the council's commitment was known.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to defer consideration of environment training for members and officers to the first meeting of the Human Resources Committee in 2020.

19/25/HR External Works' Role Swap

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr Miss K. Ellis, members **RESOLVED** that under Section 1, Paragraph 2 of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for this item of business as it included confidential information relating to an individual within the meaning of paragraphs 1 and 8 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (see Section 1 and Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985), as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

19/26/HR Reimbursement of Pension Contributions

The town clerk confirmed one former employee who was owed a refund would be paid the appropriate sum.

19/27/HR Works Programme

The operations manager said the external works' team worked approximately to the programme to ensure no tasks were missed but it was weather dependent and it depended on what else was going on at the specific time, such as emergencies which may arise.

Cllr B. Larcombe wished to thank maintenance operative Steve Hossack for the work he had done in the mayor's parlour, which was a great improvement to the room. He asked how the mould on the stairs of the Guildhall was being dealt with.

The operations manager said a dehumidifier had proved effective so he was now intending on purchasing one for more regular use.

19/28/HR To receive the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 15 July 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2019 were **RECEIVED**.

The operations manager said the next meeting of the Health and Safety Committee was on 1 November 2019.

In response to a question from Cllr B. Larcombe, the operations manager confirmed the fire evacuation of the first floor of Guildhall Cottage was adequate, and the second-floor staircase was adequate and compliant with safety and evacuation standards.

19/29/HR Exempt Business

a) Staffing Structure Review

Cllr B. Larcombe said the review could potentially have an implication for ongoing costs and he asked what the budget implications were.

The town clerk said at the time this report was presented to the council, it was alongside a proposal for job evaluation, which would have evaluated the roles within the proposed new structure, but the council had since decided not to carry out job evaluation. However, he said that didn't mean individual jobs couldn't be evaluated, as this had been done in the past.

Members discussed whether the new structure involved anyone taking on any more responsibility than they currently had and whether re-assigning roles would necessarily have salary implications.

The town clerk explained what the proposed changes were and whether it would constitute a material change in individuals' roles.

The administrative officer left the meeting at 8.10pm.

The town clerk explained how the proposed changes would affect the administrative officer and the post would report directly to the town clerk.

The administrative officer returned to the meeting at 8.18pm.

Members discussed whether there would be enough ongoing project management work to justify this being the deputy town clerk's main responsibility.

The town clerk said if it came to a point where there were no more projects, the council could look at the structure again. He said the proposed structure was intended to get the most out of the current employees and utilise their skills to the full. He said if circumstances changed, the council may want to re-visit the structure in future.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr B. Larcombe, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the proposed new staffing structure; to set up a panel to look at the grading of the roles and make recommendations to the Human Resources Committee; and to appoint Cllrs B. Larcombe, J. Broom and G. Stammers to the panel.

b) External Works' Role Swap

The town clerk confirmed both members of staff were competent to take on the new roles and the request had come from them.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the permanent role swap between a member of the gardening staff and a member of maintenance staff.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm.