

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER 2018

Present

Chairman: Cllr B. Larcombe

Members: Cllr D. Hallett, Cllr Mrs M. Ellis, Cllr S. Larcombe, Cllr Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, Cllr J. Scowen, Cllr G. Turner, Cllr S. Williams

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

18/46/HR Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

18/47/HR Apologies

Cllr J. Broom – holiday
Cllr O. Lovell

18/48/HR To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 26 September 2018

Under minute 18/40/HR, Weed Spraying, Cllr S. Larcombe said he made the comment about waiting to see if the product was re-licensed, and he seconded the recommendation.

Under minute number 18/34/HR, Health and Safety Committee Minutes, Cllr B. Larcombe asked that his comment regarding the council office was added to the minutes as follows: "Cllr B. Larcombe expressed concern about the stairs to the council office and the potential speed of fire and evacuation of staff and less mobile members of the public."

Proposed by Cllr J. Scowen and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, with the above amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2018 were **ADOPTED**.

18/49/HR Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

18/50/HR Dispensations

There were none.

18/51/HR Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Human Resources Committee meeting held on 26 September 2018

Weed spraying

Cllr J. Scowen said he had researched this issue and now had serious concerns about staff using glyphosate products. He said he would support the external works' team not using it as safety was paramount, but he understood there was currently no real alternative.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said the council had already made the decision to sanction weed spraying with glyphosate-based products and continue to look for alternatives.

Cllr B. Larcombe said the operations manager would explore alternatives and suggested the concerns raised at this meeting were referred to the Town Management and Highways Committee.

The town clerk confirmed the product was licensed but if this changed, its use would be withdrawn immediately. He said there was no reason the Town Management and Highways Committee couldn't consider this issue in further detail, but the council was working on the best advice available, which stated it was a safe product.

Cllr S. Williams asked that the safety precautions were made clear to employees.

Operations supervisor/lengthsman

Cllr S. Williams asked if this employee could be tasked to work on the outskirts of the town to tidy up those areas.

The town clerk said discussions had taken place with Dorset County Council (DCC) about the lengthsman being able to move into the role historically undertaken by DCC highways. He said training had and would continue to take place and officers were also keen for the two lengthsman to work on the boundaries.

18/52/HR Update Report

The town clerk confirmed the new administrative assistant, Angela Hankin, would start on 19 November 2018.

Members supported the officers' proposal to enter into an agreement with Victoria Stocqueler to secure her employment as an amenities assistant for next year, with the option of covering shifts over the winter, when required.

18/53/HR Issues Arising from the Extraordinary Full Council on 7 August 2018

Members discussed whether the finance assistant would qualify for an incremental enhancement due to her level 3 qualification, with reference to the council's learning and development policy.

The town clerk said members could choose to retrospectively award an incremental enhancement, but this would set a precedent, as there were a number of other employees who had gained qualifications before joining the council and would therefore qualify.

Cllr B. Larcombe said if someone had a relevant qualification, this would help them secure the job in the first place. He said he knew of no other organisation which applied a retrospective added value.

The town clerk said the finance assistant had not made this request; it was made by another employee on her behalf. He added that the finance assistant was currently studying for a level 4 qualification, which would qualify her for an incremental enhancement.

Members acknowledged the extra work the finance assistant was currently undertaking but agreed an incremental enhancement was not the correct way to reward this.

Proposed by Cllr S. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** not to pay the finance assistant an additional increment for a qualification obtained before she joined the council.

18/54/HR Driving Licence Training

Cllr S. Larcombe suggested paying for half of the costs for driving lessons and an examination.

Cllr S. Williams said a cap needed to be put on this to ensure the council's contribution was not open-ended, as it was not known how long it would take them to pass their tests.

The town clerk suggested the council could pay half of the intensive course, i.e. £225 per course, £450 in total for two employees, and if after the course they had not passed their test, they would pay for additional costs.

Cllr D. Hallett asked why they were employed if they couldn't drive. He was also concerned this would give the wrong message to other employees who had paid for their own driving lessons.

The town clerk said holding a driving licence was not considered 'essential' to these roles, as per the job descriptions. He added that one of the employees was too young to drive when he joined the council.

Members agreed each employee should be limited to one test each, and the lessons should not take place during work hours, unless the employee made up the time.

Members also discussed whether the employees would have to pay the council back if they left the organisation within 12 months.

The town clerk said the learning and development policy already covered this. He added if lessons took place during work hours, the employees would work additional hours to compensate. He said there would also be an expectation the employees would continue with lessons, at their own expense, if they did not pass after the intensive course.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to pay £225 each for the seafront attendant and a gardener to undertake a fast pass intensive driving course, subject to agreed conditions.

Cllr D. Hallett voted against this motion.

18/55/HR Christmas and New Year Working Arrangements

In response to a member question, the town clerk said working arrangements were in line with previous years and there had been no problems in the past.

Cllr S. Williams said managers should work on a rota on dedicated days to ensure someone could be contacted if necessary over the holiday period.

The town clerk said if the council wanted managers to be on-call, this would come at a premium. He said the existing arrangements, where each of the three managers could be contacted in an emergency when the office was closed, had worked well in the past. He added that his telephone number was provided on the office answer machine during the holiday period.

Proposed by Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds and seconded by Cllr J. Scowen, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to apply 1.5 days of discretionary leave from midday to 5pm on Monday 24 December 2018 and all day on Monday 31 December 2018; to apply statutory leave on Thursday 27 December and Friday 28 December 2018; to 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 work over the Christmas and New Year period to be paid overtime and time-off-in-lieu for the day worked.

18/56/HR Finance Assistant Additional Payment

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, 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 matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person 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.

18/57/HR Sickness Absence

Proposed by Cllr Mrs M. Ellis and seconded by Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, 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 matters relating to relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person 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.

18/58/HR Exempt Business

a) Finance Assistant Additional Payment

Cllr B. Larcombe said there would come a point when the council would have to review the post anyway and that would be determined by job evaluation. He said when the temporary issues in the finance department had been resolved, the council should review the structure of the team.

Members agreed an additional payment should be made while the staffing issues in the finance team were ongoing and the finance assistant was carrying out work above her pay grade, and this payment should be re-evaluated when the temporary staffing issues were resolved.

The town clerk said the long-term aim was to develop the finance assistant so there would someone who could deputise for the finance manager in his absence and someone who could potentially move into that role if the opportunity arose.

Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds suggested a letter should also be sent on behalf of the council to thank the finance assistant for taking on additional duties. This was supported by members.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr Mrs C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve an additional payment to the finance assistant of £230 per month, and for a letter to be sent to the employee from the council, thanking her for taking on additional duties.

b) Sickness Absence

Cllr D. Hallett was concerned sickness absence, in these cases, was being caused by the council or the management of the council. He was also concerned with the way some of the issues had been dealt with by officers and how sickness absence had been recorded.

The town clerk said there were triggers which determined whether sickness absence should be reported to the council, but officers were not passing judgement or suggesting any absence was not legitimate. He clarified some of the issues regarding the recording of absence for post-holder 204.

Members discussed how the sickness absence of post-holder 101 was being managed and whether there was an opportunity to resolve the matter.

Cllr B. Larcombe said all the correct processes were being followed and everything the council would expect to be done, was being done, such as keeping-in-touch days and dialogue with the employee and trade union.

Cllr Mrs M. Ellis said it was important members did not know the details of this matter at this point, as it may be referred to this committee in the future.

Cllr B. Larcombe said it was important the committee could demonstrate it was in tune with any notes or recommendations in reports, so there was no reason a member could say at a later date they hadn't been kept informed.

The meeting ended at 8.36pm.