

LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present

Chairman: Cllr G. Stammers

Members: Cllr J. Broom, Cllr M. Ellis, Cllr B. Larcombe, Cllr C. Reynolds, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Turner

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

21/16/HR Public Forum

There were no members of public present.

21/17/HR Apologies

Cllr K. Ellis – work commitments
Cllr S. Williams – illness

21/18/HR To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 9 June 2021

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2021 were **ADOPTED**.

21/19/HR Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were none.

21/20/HR Dispensations

There were none.

21/21/HR Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Human Resources Committee meeting held on 9 June 2021

Seafront attendant

Cllr M. Ellis asked if the seafront attendant had had any interim talks with his line manager to check everything was ok before his six-month probation interview.

The town clerk said his induction was completed on his first day and a one-month interview was conducted, all in accordance with the induction policy.

Works Supervisor/Lengthsman role – Spinal Column Point Banding Review

Cllr B. Larcombe asked what progress had been made on the drafting of a new job description for the works supervisor/lengthsman.

The support services manager said the operations manager was discussing it with the works supervisor/lengthsman as his line manager.

21/22/HR Update Report

Members' allowances

Cllr C. Reynolds asked if there had been any response since the council responded to the members' allowance survey and whether the Dorset Parish Independent Remuneration Panel would make the decision on the level of the allowance.

The town clerk said there had not been a response as the survey deadline hadn't yet passed. He said the panel would take into account the survey submissions and he believed Dorset Council would want to complete the process before budget-setting, therefore a decision was expected in the autumn.

The town clerk said the council wasn't bound by the panel's decision and could choose to do something different, but it had to pay proper regard to its decision.

21/23/HR Human Resources' Annual Review for Members

The town clerk said a report was presented to the previous meeting about staff and it was felt appropriate that the committee looked at what was going on in the member domain.

The support services manager said if members agreed, it was intended to publish the information in the report on the council website. Members agreed this was a good idea.

Cllr M. Ellis asked how much was in the budget for training as all the training in 2020-21 had been undertaken by the same member. She said if all members chose to do the same amount of training, there may not be enough in the budget.

The town clerk said the office publicised training events from DAPTC as they were received but he agreed it was something that needed to be kept track of. He said members needed to undertake more training as it contributed towards the Local Council Award Scheme. However, the council hadn't progressed with scheme because lack of member training and member behaviour were issues which would affect progression.

It was agreed a list of upcoming training courses and events would be brought to this committee so all members had an opportunity to see what was available.

Members discussed representation on external bodies. Cllr C. Reynolds felt more members needed to put themselves forward to be representatives to avoid others being appointed to too many groups.

The town clerk said the time to think about this was when appointments are made to organisations for 2022-23 and to perhaps consider putting a cap on the number of organisations a member could be appointed to.

Cllr G. Stammers said as a new member, she felt more information about what the role involved and what was expected of them would help members make an informed decision about whether they wanted to be a representative.

Cllr M. Ellis said the council needed to check if the organisations wanted a representative as she had been appointed to several organisations for three years and had never been invited to participate.

It was agreed the town clerk would write to the organisations before the new council year to ask organisations if they still wanted a representative and to ask them their expectations of the representative.

21/24/HR The Impact of the Living Wage

The town clerk said this committee had considered the issue of the impact of the Living Wage on the council's lower paid employees several times and needed to keep it on the radar, as the increase in the government's National Living Wage had been in excess of inflation and local government pay awards.

The town clerk said the gap between both the National Living Wage and the real living Wage and the council's lower paid employees was getting narrower because it was pushing up the pay of the non-skilled workers, which impacted on the pay of the semi-skilled workers. He said he could foresee a situation where lower paid workers could be determined by the National living Wage Living Wage.

Members noted the report and agreed the council should keep its eye on the situation.

21/25/HR National Insurance Increase from 1 April 2022

Members noted the report.

21/26/HR Homeworking

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, 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.

21/27/HR Exempt Business

a) Homeworking

Members considered the deputy town clerk's request for some homeworking and agreed he was always accessible and responsive, regardless of whether he was in the office or working from home.

Cllr C. Reynolds agreed a homeworking policy was required as it was understood the government was considering homeworking for the winter to help prevent the spread of Covid.

Cllr B. Larcombe felt the deputy town clerk's request was workable because he undertook project management work which had defined outcomes and performance management could be judged by output. He said the council needed to carefully consider what it meant for the rest of the office staff as not every role was suited to homeworking.

Cllr M. Ellis agreed and said if there were any further requests from staff to work from home, each request would need to be considered on its own merits.

Cllr J. Broom felt the policy should include a more specific termination clause and suggested either party should be required to give three months' notice to terminate the agreement. This was agreed by members.

Cllr J. Broom asked if there would be a review of any homeworking arrangements each year.

The town clerk said a review would be included as part of the annual appraisal process but this could be made clearer in the policy. Members agreed this.

Cllr B. Larcombe asked if there would be an annual homeworking assessment where the council inspected the employee's home.

The support services manager said officers did not feel it would be necessary to inspect employees' homes and that a self-assessment of their own work area, which employees currently did for the office, would be sufficient.

Cllr J. Broom asked if the deputy town clerk would be required to come into the office when the town clerk was not in.

The town clerk said the deputy town clerk could still fulfil his deputising role remotely but he would be flexible and could come into the office if absolutely necessary. He said there were now other experienced managers who could step in if neither the town clerk nor deputy town clerk were in the office.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the homeworking policy, with the addition of a three-month termination clause for either party and an annual review of any homeworking arrangement.

Proposed by Cllr B. Larcombe and seconded by Cllr C. Reynolds, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve a homeworking request from Mark Green, deputy town clerk, to work from home on up to two days per week.

The meeting closed at 8.03pm.