

**LYME REGIS TOWN COUNCIL**

**HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2022**

**Present**

**Chairman:** Cllr G. Stammers

**Members:** Cllr J. Broom, Cllr D. Sarson, Cllr G. Turner

**Officers:** A. Mullins (support services manager), J. Wright (town clerk)

**21/41/HR Public Forum**

There were no members of public who wished to speak.

**21/42/HR Apologies**

Cllr M. Ellis – work commitments

Cllr B. Larcombe – on other council business

Cllr C. Reynolds – personal reasons

**21/43/HR To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting held on 3 November 2021**

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2021 were **ADOPTED**.

**21/44/HR Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were none.

**21/45/HR Dispensations**

There were none.

**21/46/HR Matters arising from the minutes of the previous Human Resources Committee meeting held on 3 November 2021**

**Finance Manager Recruitment**

The town clerk confirmed the assistant finance manager took up the post on 7 February 2022 as expected and she seemed to have settled into the role. He said the finance manager had attended her first Strategy and Finance Committee meeting and would continue to attend those meetings when required.

**21/47/HR Update Report**

**Plumbing Training**

Members were pleased to hear the maintenance operative was progressing well with his training and was taking on more plumbing tasks as they came up.

**21/48/HR Minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting on 16 December 2021**

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, the minutes of the Health and Safety Committee meeting held on 16 December 2021 were **RECEIVED**.

**21/49/HR Health and Safety Policy Review**

The town clerk asked members to conder the issue of eye tests as currently, office staff were reimbursed for eye tests but external works' staff were not. He suggested the council should consider parity between the two teams.

Members felt staff should be treated equally and the council did require the external works' staff to drive vehicles and do close-up work that required good eyesight.

Cllr G. Stammers said eye tests also picked up other things which affected the eyes, such as toxocariasis and Lyme Disease which could be related to their work.

As one of the proposed new sections of the policy was about asbestos management, Cllr G. Turner asked if there was still a lot of asbestos in the council's premises.

The town clerk said the biggest concern was the cadet hut and the asbestos roof but as long as it wasn't disturbed, it shouldn't cause too much of an issue, although officers were keeping an eye on subsidence of the building. However, he said there were not as many staff now using the building for rest facilities due to Covid and new zoning arrangements.

Cllr J. Broom asked why the policy needed to include reference to the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 as he said the council would be the client and would employ someone else to explain the requirements.

The town clerk said health and safety sat with the governance of the organisation and it had to be confident there were proper systems and processes in place. He said the council also had to be confident it employed someone who was competent enough to adhere to the regulations.

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the updated health and safety policy and to include in the policy that external works' staff are provided with an appropriate eyesight test if they request one.

## **21/50/HR      Review of Employee Handbook – Part 2**

The support services manager said the majority of the changes were to remove gender references, to reflect changes within the organisation and to reflect changes in legislation.

The support services manager said there was also a new section added in about making reasonable variations to timescales and processes when following a procedure, for example the bullying and harassment procedure, to allow greater flexibility as there had recently been situations where it had been difficult to stick to the timescales for various reasons. She said any changes would be communicated to all parties.

Proposed by Cllr G. Turner and seconded by Cllr G. Stammers, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve the proposed amendments to the staff handbook up to page 79.

## **21/51/HR      Member Allowances**

The town clerk said the outcome from the Dorset Parish Independent Remuneration Panel was disappointing; despite the council making representations historically and him personally being interviewed by the panel along with several other clerks, this hadn't made a difference and the panel had decided to continue basing the allowance on size of population.

The town clerk said this would mean a reduction in allowance but the panel had introduced a degree of flexibility so if a council felt it was being unfairly treated, it could increase its members' allowance by one band. He said this would mean instead of a reduction of £99, the allowance would increase to £534 per annum, which represented a small overall increase. He added that although most members didn't claim an allowance, he understood it was a matter of principle.

Cllr J. Broom said as the council had the General Power of Competence, he couldn't see why the council couldn't set its own level of members' allowance, although he understood this may be criticised by residents.

The town clerk said the legislation said councils should pay proper consideration to the recommendations of the panel. He said the ultimate test was whether the council could justify its decision to the electorate and one of the consequences of not following the panel's recommendations was the possibility of the council being open to judicial review of its decision-making processes.

Cllr D. Sarson asked when the next review would take place.

The town clerk said the last review was in 2019 and before that it was either in 2010 or 2012. He said an assessment that town and parish councillors were worth 3% of the value of a Dorset councillor didn't reflect the work and responsibilities of Lyme Regis Town council members

The town clerk said the council was also required to agree how much it would pay for other expenses, such as mileage and overnight stays, and those allowances needed to be displayed on the council's website.

Cllr J. Broom suggested all members claimed the allowance and then gave it to charity.

The town clerk said members could do what they liked with their allowance; the budget assumed every member claimed an allowance and as only a few did, it was always underspent.

Proposed by Cllr D. Sarson and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve a basic members' allowance and the duties for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances, as detailed below:

- payment of basic members allowances at level 3
- mileage allowances in accordance with HM Revenue and Customs Mileage Allowance Payments (MAPs), paragraph 19
- the reimbursement of the standard or actual fare for travel on public transport, paragraph 19
- the payment of parking fees at the amount incurred, paragraph 19
- subsistence allowances on reimbursement of receipted expenditure within the maximum limits set out in paragraph 20
- room only subsistence for overnight absence, other than London, should be £85.92 incl. VAT or £112.96 incl. VAT in London

the implementation of these allowances is from 1 April 2022, they are reviewed annually and displayed on the council's website.

## **21/52/HR In-house Member Training**

The town clerk said the proposed training was probably more applicable to newer members and useful as a refresher as it might help put things into context now members had the benefit of some experience. He said he intended to get the staff involved in delivering the training and suggested offering it up to neighbouring councils who might benefit from it.

The town clerk said he would put a programme together over the next 18 months. He said he would gauge when there was demand for the training, i.e. day times or evenings, and bring a programme to the next meeting.

Cllr G. Stammers said she felt it would help with decision-making and help improve the council's links with neighbouring councils.

## **21/53/HR Member Training and Development**

The support services manager said there were a huge amount of courses, webinars, and e-learning available to members which were mainly virtual and although some were on specific dates and times, many were on demand and could be completed at members' convenience.

The support services manager said the member training budget was underspent and encouraged members to ask for more information about any topics that interested them.

**21/54/HR Latest Covid-19 Position**

The town clerk said there had been another government announcement with plans to remove all remaining Covid-19 restrictions after the February half term, including the requirement to isolate if you have the virus.

**21/55/HR Postholder 218, Six-Month Probation Report**

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, 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.

**21/56/HR Enforcement Officer Abuse**

Proposed by Cllr G. Stammers and seconded by Cllr D. Sarson, 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.

**21/57/HR Exempt Business**

**a) Postholder 218, Six-Month Probation Report**

Cllr G. Stammers asked if the postholder would be offered to learn to drive.

The support services manager said this was within the members' gift and a precedent had been set as the council had previously paid for driving lessons for two employees to assist them in their roles.

Proposed by Cllr J. Broom and seconded by Cllr G. Turner, members agreed to **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL** to approve postholder 218's continued employment with the council.

**b) Enforcement Office Abuse**

The town clerk gave members details about the escalation of abuse towards one enforcement officer and how officers were dealing with this.

*The meeting closed at 8.04pm.*