

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the STAFFING COMMITTEE

held on Monday 15th November 2021

PRESENT Councillor E. A. Culverhouse – Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	S. J. Booth	Councillor	R.S. Matthews
"	M. Fayyaz	"	J. E. MacBean
"	J. C. Fulford	"	F. S. Wilson

Officers: Mr W. Richards – Town Clerk
Mr S. Pearson – Finance and Contracts Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G.D. Williams.

7 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest that were brought to the Chairman's notice.

8. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the Staffing Working Party held on 14th June 2021, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

9. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was moved by the Chairman and

RESOLVED

that the public and the press be excluded from the following item in accordance with the Public Bodies (Access to Meetings) Act 1960, as matters which are considered to be confidential are about to be discussed.

10. **ANNUAL REVIEW OF STAFF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND PAY**

The Committee were apprised of the Annual Review of Staff and Pay. Members had been reminded that annual increment increases (unless withheld through review of performances) were within officers' contracts and that pay rises were determined nationally. It was noted that all officers, bar one, were recommended to be advanced. A brief discussion ensued again on appraisals and advancement of salaries thereof in the future but it was agreed that a proper review of this should be considered after the new senior staff were in post.

Members then discussed the rest of the Town Clerk's paper pertaining to general staff issues and recommendations forthcoming from the annual appraisals.

The Committee noted that every section head had raised issues in respect to adequacy of staffing levels. While accepting that these needed to be considered, there was a consensus that it would be wrong to agree changes until the new Chief Executive Officer was in post and they had the opportunity to review the overall staffing structure. Similarly, it was agreed that no external staffing review should be commissioned; no additional payments or increased salaries to individuals be confirmed or no further monies committed to staffing additions at a more junior level until the senior officers was in place. The only exceptions to this were the agreements to confirm the creation of the Parks and Premises Administration Assistant on the terms outlined in the report and the re-categorising of the current Junior Groundsmen to a Parks and Premises Operative.

Councillor Wilson opined that it was important to get the message out to staff that this was the proposed way forward and there would be a comprehensive review of staffing in the near future and their concerns would be considered accordingly. It was agreed that the Mayor and the Clerk devise and sign a general letter to all staff members confirming that this was the Council's intention while emphasising appreciation of their efforts during the pandemic.

The Clerk did re-emphasise his opinion that the monitoring of health and safety and risk assessments was paramount and there were concern that officers were facing a capacity issue in keeping the risk assessments up-to-date. It was agreed that it would be sensible to engage the current external Health and Safety advisors to undertake a root and branch review of all the Council's services first and then decide how best to tackle the issues raised in terms of staffing capacity following the consultant's recommendations.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That the awarding of any annual increments to all staff who have not reached the top of their grade following satisfactory annual appraisals, from 1st April 2022 be noted.
2. That payment of the NJC, SEE and Inland Revenue rates and allowances be continued.
3. That the current Junior Groundsman employee be promoted to a Parks & Premises Operative and placed on the grade and salary recommended within the report from the 1st April 2022.
4. That the creation and recruitment of a Parks and Premises Administration Assistant in line with the job description and salary as presented to start as soon as practicably possible be agreed.
5. That the contracting of Work Nest to undertake a root and branch review health and safety review on all services be agreed.

6. That the Mayor and Clerk devise and circulate a letter to all staff informing them of the Council's plans to reassess staffing structures following the appointment and arrival of the new senior officers.

11. PROPOSED SENIOR STAFF APPOINTMENTS

The Committee was asked to consider the recommendations of the Staffing Sub Group that Buckinghamshire Council be appointed as the HR body to support the recruitment process of the two new senior staff members. Members were reminded that the Council had already agreed in principle to the appointments at its September meeting and the question of salaries was not open to debate at this juncture. Costings had already been circulated by Councillor Booth and would be part of the budgetary debate at the next Finance Committee.

Following a vote, to which there were two abstentions, it was

RESOLVED

that Buckinghamshire Council be agreed as the organisation selected to support the recruitment process for the two senior posts as recommended at the Staffing Sub Group meeting and on the terms outlined within the report.

12. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

CHAIRMAN