

**Personnel and Administration Committee**  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020 at 7.30pm  
Meeting held via Zoom



## Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this committee.

### Councillors

M Khan (Chair)  
A Macdonald (Vice Chair)  
A Thompson (Sub for Cllr J Durman)  
V Haval  
A Sandiford

### Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk)

### Public participation

None

### 15. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr J Durman. The Committee welcomed Cllr A Sandiford.

### 16. Declarations of interest

None.

### 17. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

It was proposed by Cllr V Haval and seconded by Cllr A. Macdonald and RESOLVED to approve the Minutes as a true record. Cllr A Sandiford abstained from this vote as she was not present.

### 18. Questions on the Minutes

Cllr V Haval asked whether Councillors should be asked about their preference regarding paper or electronic papers. It was pointed out by Cllr M Khan that this Council declared a climate emergency and therefore Councillors should be

encouraged to move to paperless meetings if possible. Cllr M Khan asked the Town Clerk about the take-up of the DTC Councillor emails. It was confirmed that just five Councillors were using their new emails but she was working with the IT company to put together some further steps as a guide and would email this information along with individual information to each Councillor. Cllr M Khan also asked about the take-up of the work from home tax rebates and how pleased he was that the Council had not furloughed any member of staff. The Town Clerk confirmed that only one member of staff was currently taking advantage of tax rebate but it was available to anyone who felt they could claim it.

## **19. To review the Didcot Town Council Extra-Ordinary Covid 19 risk assessment for the DTC offices**

The Town Clerk introduced the risk assessment. There were two versions – one of the DTC offices and staff and one for the Civic Hall. The Civic Hall document was discussed at their meeting. The staff version was deferred by F&GP on 27<sup>th</sup> July because it was not attached. The Committee reviewed the document and made the following comments:

Cllr A Macdonald requested that RISK MITIGATION should be put in the second column because there was one main risk which was catching Covid 19 and most of the document was referring to mitigation.

Cllr A Sandiford wanted to discuss the recording of details of visitors to the DTC Offices. It was AGREED that staff would need to sign in all visitors and sign out – with contact details to aid the track and trace in the event of an outbreak.

It was noted that there seemed to be a lot of enforcement in the risk assessment. The Town Clerk said that the Deputy Civic Hall Manager had put together a manual on running the Civic Hall and this would help all staff to take a turn including those who had previously only worked for the Town Council. Cllr Khan also said that he wanted to make sure we had two members of staff on duty at all times.

Cllr V Haval felt that notices should be put on hand dryers to discourage use along with tape on the floor in the bar and café areas. She felt that the larger rooms at the Civic Hall would be popular with groups wanting to meet but maintain social distance.

It was AGREED to note the risk assessment with the comments made and Cllr Khan said that this was an evolving document which would be subject to amendment as Government advice changes.

## **20. To discuss the new draft Code of Conduct**

The consultation was due to close on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and therefore not enough time to respond as a Council. It was AGREED for the Town Clerk to circulate the consultation link to all Councillors. They could then respond individually to the consultation.

Cllr M Khan felt that there was little new about the recommendations and the proposed sanctions were not strong enough to encourage a change of behaviour.

The final Code of Conduct would be circulated to this Committee for comment before being sent to all members.

## **21. To discuss and note the recent changes in Employment legislation from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020**

The Town Clerk presented a paper alerting the Committee to some of the changes that may affect the Town Council. This was more of a reminder for the Town Clerk and the Committee to be aware of the various changes in employment law which affects the Town Council as an employer. The Council employ Ellis Whittam for more detailed advice. It was noted that the contract with Ellis Whittam was due for renewal in April 2021. Cllr M Khan was interested to see who other Councils were using.

It was AGREED to note the paper including:

- The Good Work Plan in force from April 2020 – employees will now have the right to more details on their terms and conditions of employment; additional information relating to sick pay; annual leave and notice periods; better rights for agency workers; continuity of employment and zero hours contracts.
- The transition period prior to coming out of the EU and the new immigration rules from 2021 which will introduce a points system to determine who will be allowed to stay.
- The changes to the National Minimum Wage from 1 April 2020:  
Over 25 years = £8.72  
21 – 24 years = £8.20  
18 – 20 years = £6.45  
16 – 17 years = £4.55  
Apprentices under the age of 19 in the first year £4.15
- Changes to Bereavement Leave of parents of a still birth child or parents who lose a child under 18 years of age.

## **22. To consider the progress report**

There were many items outstanding which the Town Clerk had not been able to complete due to staff changes. The progress report was noted for this meeting.

## **23. Exclusion of the press and public**

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

## **24. To review the status of two staffing programmes**

The Town Clerk circulated a confidential staff report concerning a Leadership and Management training course which two members of staff were currently enrolled. The courses had been put in place by the previous Town Clerk in March 2019. The

action was not minuted and therefore has not had the approval from Council. The current Town Clerk only became aware of the courses in November 2019 and there was no information in the personnel folders for either member of staff.

The Town Clerk had circulated details of the courses with the agenda and asked Councillors to note that these courses were an apprenticeship programme partly funded by the Government. The levy is paid to the training provider – not the Council.

Cllr M Khan was in favour of staff training and advancement however he was concerned that this had never been presented or approved by Councillors. There was no scrutiny on the appropriateness of the courses and no audit trail. It was unclear whether there was any further financial commitment to the Council should either member of staff withdraw from their course. A meeting was due to be held with the course providers to discuss the issue further.

The Committee was clear that more appropriate courses to enhance staff skills would be supported as long as they go through the Council process. The Town Clerk was committed to putting together staff training programmes for all staff.

## **25. To discuss the confidential staffing report**

The Town Clerk up-dated the Committee on various personnel matters. The staff were more or less back in the offices now. This was giving us time to get the offices and the Civic Hall ready for opening.

It was confirmed that appraisals were complete for most staff, including the outside team.

It was noted that there were two resignations received: the Finance Manager with one month's notice and the Outside Services Manager with three months notice. It was AGREED to take some time to consider what we needed in terms of staff. Handover documents from both members of staff would be essential and consideration of the comments of the internal auditor in terms of saving time with better management processes.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair      Date \_\_\_\_\_