

Draft Minutes of a Meeting of the **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** held at the **TOWN HALL, SWANAGE** on **WEDNESDAY 15th OCTOBER 2025** at 9.50 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor S. Vile – Chairman

Councillor M. Bonfield (Town Mayor)

Councillor T. Foster

Also Present:-

Dr M. Ayres

Mr C. Milmer

Miss A. Spencer (joined remotely)

Mrs B. Varga

Town Clerk

Visitor Services & Business Development
Manager

Finance Manager

Payroll and Personnel Officer

Public Participation Time

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for their inability to attend the meeting had been received from Councillors Dorrington and Tomes.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were invited to declare their interests and consider any requests for Grants of Dispensations in accordance with Section 9 and Appendix B of the Council's Code of Conduct.

There were no declarations to record on this occasion.

3. **STAFF HANDBOOK POLICY UPDATES**

Consideration was given to the content of a briefing note which set out a number of amendments made to the Staff Handbook. South West Councils have provided updates to existing policies as well as new policies covering Disciplinary, Grievance, Absence Management, Bullying and Harassment, Menopause, Health and Wellbeing, Reasonable Adjustments and Neonatal Policy provisions. Particular attention was given to the wording of the Disciplinary and Menopause Policies.

It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Foster and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

TO RECOMMEND:

That the new and amended policies covering Disciplinary, Grievance, Absence Management, Bullying and Harassment, Menopause, Health and Wellbeing, Neonatal and Reasonable Adjustments be adopted, subject to the wording relating to minor breaches in section 5.1 of the Disciplinary Policy being reviewed and the reference to 'medical treatment' in section 1 of the Menopause Policy being removed.

4. **TO CONSIDER PRELIMINARY EMPLOYEE BUDGET FOR THE 2026/27 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Members considered a briefing note summarising the 2025/26 year to date and the estimated employee costs for the 2026/27 financial year, in order to agree an employee budget to present to the Finance & Governance Committee on 17th December 2025.

It was noted that the forecast for 2025/26 currently shows a potential underspend of £79.8k due to vacant posts, flexible working requests and under employment in seasonal posts. Additionally, the actual pay award was 3.2%, compared to the 4% originally forecast, further contributing to a variance in the budget.

In estimating the 2026/27 employee costs, it was reported a 3% pay award had been applied to all posts and that an Employer's National Insurance Contribution (NIC) rate of 15% had been applied, pending any further changes that may be introduced by central government in the forthcoming budget. It was further reported that an Employer's pension contribution rate of 22% had also been applied, pending confirmation of the 2026/27 to 2028/29 rate by the actuary in November/December.

Members considered each of the departmental budgets: Central Services, Operations and Visitor Services. The Visitor Services & Business Development Manager outlined proposals for the staffing of the Visitor Services department in 2026/27. It was noted that additional hours will be required at Beach Gardens to cover breaks during peak periods. A new seasonal Customer Services Assistant post was proposed to cover the Seafront, Boat Park and Market, replacing the existing seasonal Boat Park Assistant role. Members also noted that the Business Support Officer had taken on increased responsibilities due to the growth and significance of events. Consequently, an additional 7 hours per week were requested to increase capacity and provide additional administrative support to facilitate the further delegation of duties.

It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by Councillor Foster and
RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: -

That the staffing budgets as set out in the briefing note, including an additional 7 hours per week for administrative support within the Visitor Services department, incorporating any known changes to Employers NIC and pension contribution rates, be taken forward to the meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee on 17th December 2025 for consideration as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process.

Members also considered the proposed staff training budget. It was proposed by Councillor Vile, seconded by the Town Mayor and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: -

That the training budget as presented of £14,000 be approved.

5. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTCOMING AGENDAS**

a) **Volunteers**

It was noted that the Assets and Compliance Manager had requested that this issue be included on a future agenda.

b) **Domestic Abuse Policy**

Members considered the potential inclusion of a Domestic Abuse Policy into the Staff Handbook. During the discussion the importance of this for councillors as well as employees was highlighted. It was agreed that further advice on this matter should be sought from South West Councils prior to consideration at an

extraordinary committee meeting, if the matter could be progressed prior to the next scheduled meeting in April.

c) **Flexible Working**

As an item of information, the Town Clerk updated those present about a number of flexible working requests that had been agreed in accordance with Council policy over recent months.

6. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for Wednesday 22nd April 2026.

The meeting closed at 10.40 a.m.
