

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** held at the **TOWN HALL, SWANAGE** on **MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023** at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT:-

Councillor W.S. Trite – Chairman

Councillor T. Foster (Town Mayor)

Councillor A. Harris

Councillor C. Moreton

Also Present:-

Councillor J. Bishop

Dr M. Ayres

Town Clerk

Mr C. Milmer

Visitor Services & Business Development  
Manager (Remotely)

Miss A. Spencer

Finance Manager

**Public Participation Time**

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

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for his inability to attend the meeting were received from Councillor Bonfield.

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. **TO CONSIDER PRELIMINARY EMPLOYEE BUDGET FOR THE 2024/25 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Members considered a briefing note summarising the estimated employee costs for 2024/25, in order to agree an employee budget to present to the Finance & Governance Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2023. It was noted that an increase of 4% had been factored into the preliminary budgets for 2024/25.

Members considered the budgets on a departmental basis with Central Services, Operations, Enforcement and Visitor Services being reviewed separately.

It was stated that the majority of approved posts in Central Services had been filled in the current year, with the Communications & Community Engagement Officer post being the exception. It was noted that this post had been removed from the proposed 2024/25 budget, however the possibility of introducing an apprenticeship post in lieu of the officer post was suggested, subject to budget approval. There were no suggested changes to the Operations or Enforcement posts.

The Visitor Services & Business Development Manager outlined three options that had been presented for the staffing of this department in 2024/25. The three options were discussed with a view to ensuring that there was the capacity to deliver services in line with the Council's Corporate Plan, with option one delivering the optimum level of service. Members discussed at length the requirement and job

description of the Seafront Advisors during which the problems encountered with recruitment to this role was noted.

Members discussed the possible removal of the Communications and Community Engagement Officer post from the staff structure. The importance of improving communications with local residents was highlighted, especially in terms of an online presence. The possibility of setting a budget for an alternative model of delivery of public communications if the post is removed was considered.

It was proposed by the Town Mayor and seconded by Councillor Moreton: -

That the staffing budget for 2024/25 as presented, with the retention of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer, be taken forward to the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25.

Upon being put to the meeting there were THREE votes IN FAVOUR and ONE ABSTENTION whereupon the proposition was declared CARRIED.

It was further AGREED:

That a report on alternatives to the employment of a Communications & Community Engagement Officer be made to the Community Services Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

It was proposed by Councillor Moreton, seconded by Councillor Harris, and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: -

That the Visitor Services staffing budget be referred to the Tourism & Local Economy Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 for further examination of the options presented and the impact on service delivery, in order that a recommendation can be made to the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25.

Members discussed the proposed budget for staff training for 2024/25. It was noted that this was a freeze on the current year's budget. It was proposed by the Town Mayor, seconded by Councillor Harris and RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That a training budget of £21,000 for 2024/25 be taken forward to the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee for consideration as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25.

#### 4. **ITEMS OF INFORMATION AND MATTERS FOR FORTHCOMING AGENDAS**

##### a) **Pay Agreement 2023/24 - Update**

It was reported that the 2023/24 pay award had yet to be agreed. A full and final offer of a flat rate increase of £1,925 across all grades that had been made by the Local Government Employers had previously been rejected by the unions. It was noted that a meeting of the three unions was due to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> October to discuss next steps.

5. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

The meeting closed at 10.15 a.m.

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