

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFF
PANEL HELD IN ARDEN HALL,
CASTLE BROMWICH, ON TUESDAY
7TH JULY 2015 AT 7.00 PM**

Those present:

- Chairman:** Cllr Mrs. Allen
- Councillors:** Cllr E Knibb Cllr J Riordan
- Officers:** Mrs. C Tibbles, Clerk to the Council/RFO [except part Item 15]
- Public:** None

1. Election of Chairman.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Knibb, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Mrs. Allen, **IT WAS RESOLVED** that Cllr Mrs. Allen be elected as Chairman of the Staff Panel for this civic year.

2. Apologies for absence.

None.

3. Declarations of pecuniary or conflict of interests.

None declared.

4. Dispensations.

None requested.

5. Minutes of the previous Meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Cllr Riordan, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Knibb, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th April, 2015, having been circulated, be signed as a true and correct record of the Meeting.

6. Questions from the Public.

Under Standing Order 3(d), the Chairman prepared to adjourn standing orders to invite questions from members of the public but there were none in attendance.

7. Terms of Reference.

Following debate, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Riordan, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Knibb, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the additional wording be included in the first function “within relevant budgets, notwithstanding contractual obligations”. The revised terms would be recommended to council for approval.

8. Review of Appraisal Policy & Training Needs.

Following consideration, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Riordan, **SECONDED BY** the Chairman, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the current (shorter) policy be retained for existing staff and that the trial of the WALC policy for the Clerk’s appraisal be extended. Cllr Knibb would request a copy of the slides from the WALC training and the Staff Panel would undertake training within 3 months for the Clerk and Hall Manager with the aim of then establishing a calendar for implementation.

9. Review of Staff Handbook.

Following consideration, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Riordan, **SECONDED BY** the Chairman, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that the Staff Panel invite ideas and suggestions from staff on what could be updated or improved in the Staff Handbook. When comparing it to the WALC policy, members had found useful references to social media policy, email policy, absence support and whistleblowing.

ACTION

Clerk
8/7

EK
asap

Panel
7/10

Clerk
Aug.15

10. Staff Appointment/Recruitment Policy.

The Clerk showed members the complexity in the WALC guidelines and members noted that for major appointments it would be helpful. However, following consideration of existing practice, **IT WAS AGREED** to ask the Clerk and the Hall Manager to jointly write a policy on the processes in place. The Clerk alerted members that current staff difficulties could delay that process.

11. Panel Priority Projects for the Year.

The main priority the Panel **AGREED** was the potential need for them to meet urgently when the Smarter Working recommendations were considered by council for approval. Other priorities were the Staff Handbook and Appraisal Training.

12. Staff Vacancies/Changes.

Following careful consideration of views received, including preliminary verbal interest, **ON THE PROPOSITION** of Cllr Knibb, **SECONDED BY** Cllr Riordan, **IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED** that two vacancies should be advertised again in the Gazette, preferably in the Castle Bromwich and Hodge Hill edition, and to include the job centre. The vacancies would be for a Duty Manager 13 hours and a Cleaner for 6 hours. Members would help place advertisements in additional local venues like churches, schools, shops, parish noticeboards/grounds and the council website plus any others that might assist. As council had previously directed, letters would be sent to staff inviting them to consider additional roles/duties. Members noted the application for maternity leave and the advice confirming the statutory responsibility that the council had. The vacancy created by the maternity leave would be considered when additional information had been received.

13. Time Management.

The Clerk asked for time to consider a response when asked to identify what tasks could be left undone and if councillors could assist in any additional tasks to the ones agreed.

14. TOIL Hours.

Following discussion, members noted the action plan already adopted was being successfully implemented. The Chair additionally requested the Clerk take time owing during the summer recess, which she undertook to consider and implement if possible.

15. Staff Issues.

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman, **IT WAS AGREED** that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest, as if members of the public were present during the consideration of such business, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under paras 1 and 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act, that the public be temporarily excluded and be instructed to withdraw. Members noted and discussed a staff absence, the advice received and **AGREED** the appropriate response of the Chairman to a communication received.

The Chairman **PROPOSED** Standing Order 3(aa) be suspended to allow the meeting to continue past 2 ½ hours due to the importance of discussions. In the absence of the Clerk, a staff matter was discussed that had been reported to the Chairman of the Council. The Clerk re-joined the meeting and notified **IT WAS AGREED** that the Panel would make a recommendation to the Council, under confidential terms, for consideration. **IT WAS AGREED** that, due to time constraints, the Clerk should circulate the additional matters being reported to the Staff Panel in writing (see appendix).

16. Next Meetings

IT WAS AGREED that this civic year the Panel meetings be held on Monday afternoons at 2 pm and were set for 5th October and 29th February 2016. The Clerk undertook to make room bookings.

ACTION

Clerk/Hall
Mgr
Dec 15

Panel
tbc

Hall Mgr
asap

Members
tba

Clerk
asap

Clerk
8/7
Panel
tbc

Clerk
5/10

Clerk
Aug.15

Clerk
8/7

PA
8/7

Council
29/7

Clerk
29/7

Item 15 – Staff Issues - Additional information

The Clerk planned to update members on the notification of changes for verification of Driving Licence ID now that the paper counterpart had been discontinued; information had been tabled on apprentices and would additionally be circulated to all members prior to the guest speaker at full Council (now confirmed); invitation to attend a complimentary masterclass held locally on legal and HR issues would be accepted; confirmation she had reviewed her CPD points (which were supplemented by her contribution to the sector, via the SLCC, in her own time serving on the National Executive Council and the Branch committee and qualified for 4 points); a provisional interest in undertaking the online ILCA course as preparation to considering CILCA at a future time.

The WM Pension Fund mid-year review meeting attended on 2nd July had provided useful information on the complexities of the current CARE scheme; the good performance of investments in past 12 months, which were unlikely to be economically sustained next year; presentation by Finance Birmingham showing use and resource of projects to generate employment; administration of leavers and spikes being dealt with; nearly all processes now on-line by employers although paperwork had to be retained at source; notification of a 3.4% increase next year in E'ERs National Insurance and the need to warn members of the scheme that E'EEs NI changes may reduce their take home pay; appropriateness of Slide 19; effects of auto enrolment prepared for by WMPF but not yet by employers. A legal update by Squire Patton Boggs highlighted the importance of Data Protection and potential for audit by Information Commissioner's Office, with fines of £160,000 levied on large organisations (city council, police force, on-line insurance company and the Ministry of Justice) [NB the Clerk had a concern on an inadvertent breach of confidentiality and would seek advice]; ill-health retirement and costs to the employer of incapacity; appointment of Independent Medical Practitioner (from approved WMPF list); responsibility to query the medical report if it did not fully answer all the questions as full facts were required by employer to make a sound decision; the law expected employers to query medical report if mistakes were found in it; liability for pension deficit (current year costing £17 per month) until next actuarial valuation in 2016 but should employers cease to have active members then lump sum calculations were performed and the council responsible for clearing deficit upon leaving.

The Clerk had set aside 3rd July to prepare for pension auto enrolment but this had not taken place. A Sage training event had been booked by the Clerk on specific payroll matters (free) and a half-day Sage course was available in Birmingham in September on Pension and payroll, costing £220.

Cathy Tibbles