

# Sandy Town Council

**Minutes of a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs N Aldis, J Hewitt, A Lock, R Lock, P Sharman (Chair) and S Sutton

**In attendance:** Mrs. N Sewell (Clerk)

	<u>Action</u>
<p><b>1 Apologies for absence (HR -25-2023/24)</b> Cllr Osborne</p>	
<p><b>2 Declarations of interest (HR-26-2023/24)</b> i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - none</i> ii) <i>Non-disclosable Interests - none</i> iii) <i>Dispensations - none</i></p>	
<p><b>3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (HR-27-2023/24)</b> <b>RESOLVED</b> to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and to confirm them as a correct record of proceedings. One small amendment was made to Item 3 where the Minute number was amended to <b>HR-16-2023/24</b></p>	
<p><b>4 Public Participation (HR-28-2023/24)</b> There were no members of the public present.</p>	Admin
<p><b>5 Health and Safety/Accident Report (HR-29-2023/24)</b> Members received a report stating no accidents had occurred since the last meeting of the Committee. <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the report.</p>	
<p><b>6 Training Report (HR-30-2023/24)</b> Members received a training report from the Town Clerk. <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the report. Members also requested that a policy regarding the reimbursement of training costs from employees who leave the Council's employment within a certain period of time after undertaking training be drafted and presented to the Policy, Finance &amp; Resources Committee for approval.</p>	Clerk
<p><b>7 Christmas Office Opening Hours (HR-31-2023/24)</b> Members received confirmation from the Clerk that the Council Offices would remain closed to the public over the Christmas period including 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> December. The offices would re-open as normal from 9am on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024. <b>RESOLVED</b> to note the opening times and asked that they be advertised through the appropriate channels.</p>	Admin

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Town Clerk

## 8 Temporary Reduction to Office Opening Hours (HR-32-2023/24)

Members received a request from the Clerk that until the recruitment of a new Civic Officer and a new Community Engagement Officer is complete the hours the Town Council office is open to public walk-ins be temporarily reduced to between 11am and 2pm Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, to support the remaining staff in the carrying out of their duties.

Clerk

**RESOLVED** to agree the new opening times for a temporary period and to revert back to the original opening times once the full team was in place.

## 9 Staff Appraisal Update (HR-33-2023/24)

Members received a verbal report from the Clerk informing them that appraisals had been carried out for the Deputy Clerk, Admin Team Leader, and Outdoor Team Leader and that the Outdoor Team Leader would be conducting appraisals with their team by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

## 10 Employment Handbook Update (HR-34-2023/24)

Members received a request to make the following amendment to the Employee Handbook regarding the notice period required for annual leave requests. It was recommended that a minimum notice period be implemented as set out below, with an exception clause for emergencies that would be agreed at the Clerk's discretion:

Clerk

- 3 working days' notice for 1 day's annual leave not including the first day of absence)
- 12 working days' notice for 1 week's annual leave not including the first day of absence
- 22 working days' notice for 2 weeks' annual leave not including the first day of absence
- Any leave required of more than 2 weeks must receive prior written agreement from the HR Committee.

**RESOLVED** to accept the recommendations and for the Employee Handbook to be amended accordingly.

## 11 COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION (HR-35-2023/24)

It was **proposed and agreed** that in terms of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, proposed and agreed that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

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## 12 Staffing Matters (HR-36-2023/24)

- i) **(Confidential)** Members received employee sick leave figures for the financial year 2023/24 to date. **RESOLVED** to note the report.

*The Chairman brought item 12iv forward to be considered before item 12ii as some of the responses to the Staff Wellbeing Survey were pertinent to the staffing matters reported in item ii.*

- ii) **(Confidential)** Members received a verbal staffing update from the Clerk. **RESOLVED** to note the update and follow HR Consultant PNC's recommendation. It was also agreed that a temporary contract of work could be offered for up to 37 hours a week, to help the administrative team with staffing during the recruitment period for the roles of Civic Officer and Community Engagement Officer, while the roles remained vacant. The budget to cover the cost of this recruitment would come from the deficit hours left by the two staff members; one who had already left the Council's employment and one who's departure was imminent (see Item 14)

Clerk

- iii) **(Confidential)** Members received an update from the Clerk regarding decisions made about the Clerk's Report at Full Council and its reporting frequency. The Clerk explained that comments made by Members that focused on the length of time it took the Clerk to prepare the report rather than its content demonstrated that the point of the report was being misunderstood. The Clerk told Members that appropriate staff members would be working with Cllr Blackley to ensure that the data in the reports was more informative going forward and gave a clearer objective to the report. **RESOLVED** to note the report.

Admin

- iv) **(Confidential)** Members received the summary results from a Staff Wellbeing Survey, which had been carried out since the last HR Committee meeting. The Clerk would be meeting with the Public Health Workplace & Wellbeing partners to further understand what the results meant for the Town Council and take advice on which areas needed improvement. **RESOLVED** to note the results. Members were concerned by some of the comments made by staff members in the survey (which was anonymous). The Clerk reassured Members that the results would be analysed and that appropriate actions/measures taken to improve areas where required.

Admin

- v) **(Confidential)** Members received notice that the NALC Pay Award for 2022/23 had been agreed and that this would be implemented, along with back pay, in the December pay roll. **RESOLVED** to note the report and make the following amendment to

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Financial Regulations 7.3 so that they read as: *No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council. The only exception to this will be when the National Pay Award is agreed on an annual basis, in which case the pay award will be implemented at the earliest possible opportunity with Full Council noting this change at the next appropriate meeting.*

Clerk

**13 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC (HR-37-2023/24)**  
**RESOLVED** that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.

**14 Staff Changes (HR-38-2023/24)**

Members received the following update regarding staff changes since the last meeting:

- Resignation of Civic Officer - leaving date 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023
- Resignation of Community Engagement Officer – leaving date 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023

**RESOLVED** to note the update.

**15 Chairman's Items (HR-39-2023/24)**

There were none

**16 Date of Next Meeting (HR-40-2023/24)**

18<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Meeting closed at 21.15