

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) COMMITTEE OF
ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 29
NOVEMBER 2019 at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Mitre Street, Abertillery**

PRESENT: Councillors:

Gill Clark (Chair), Tracey Dyson, Rob Phillips and Allen Rees

Officers: Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk and Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk

Others: None

ABSENT: Councillor Julie Holt

135. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Julie Holt.

136. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members declared any personal interests.

137. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business, by virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that disclosure of the matters to be discussed would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of those matters.

138. CHRISTMAS SHUTDOWN DATES

The Committee RESOLVED to replicate the arrangements of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and close the Community Council office from Tuesday 24 December 2019 at 12.00 noon until Thursday 2 January 2020 at 9am.

139. ANNUAL STAFF APPRAISAL

The Clerk circulated copies of the appraisals of the Clerk (conducted by the Chair of the Council and HR Committee) and the Deputy Clerk (conducted by the Clerk). The committee spent a few minutes reading the staff appraisals.

The Clerk explained that he and the Deputy Clerk had potential personal interests in the outcomes of their appraisals as their terms of conditions of work (e.g. pay) may be affected. The officers offered to leave the room whilst the committee undertook their deliberations. The committee asked officers to stay in the meeting.

Members discussed:

- the lack of hours available for staff to do everything required by the Council
- the inadequacy of training (quantity and quality) provided for staff in the past
- the need to look for alternative, more in depth, training options for staff as the training provided by One Voice Wales was aimed at councillors and was too basic for staff
- the need for the Council to have the best possible training for staff, including CILCA (the recognised qualification for Clerks and likely standard if the General Power of Competence (GPOC) is introduced in Wales in future)
- the lack of time available for staff to undertake training, given current working hours.

The Committee RESOLVED:

- (1) that the appraisals are approved
- (2) that staff performance has been satisfactory
- (3) that staff training has been inadequate in the past (quantity and quality)
- (4) that ALCC wants to be the best it can be, so needs the best training for staff, including CILCA, especially in light of the potential GPOC
- (5) that staff report back to the committee on other training options, costs and potential time commitments, including external training (e.g. the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), Blaenau Gwent CBC who provide staff training for CBC staff) and CILCA.

140. ANNUAL REVIEW OF STAFFING AND PAY STRUCTURE

The Clerk reminded members that the HR Committee was responsible for an annual review of staffing and pay structure, in line with its terms of reference. He circulated copies of the current national pay structure and explained where he and the Deputy Clerk were positioned in terms of their contracted pay scales.

The Clerk and Deputy Clerk explained that they had potential personal interests in the outcomes of any review as it may affect their terms of conditions of work (e.g. pay or hours). They offered to leave the room whilst the committee undertook their deliberations. The committee asked officers to stay in the meeting, answer questions and hear the debate.

Members discussed:

- the hours of work of ALCC's two part time staff
- the public opening hours of the Council offices; whether office opening hours should be extended; and the very small number of public visitors to ALCC
- the need to have two staff in at the same time (not lone working at different times)
- the significant increase in the demands on ALCC staff since they started in late 2016 and early 2017 (and the almost trebling of ALCC's budget since 2016)
- whether staffing numbers and hours were sufficient going forward
- the extent to which the Council had moved forward since the current staff started
- the Council's ambitions for more projects, more initiatives and a higher precept
- the need to review the job descriptions and job evaluation for the roles, which were out of date
- whether staff hours should be increased or more people (including admin staff and agency staff for one-off projects) should be employed
- the need to include staffing costs as part of the costs of new projects in future.

The Clerk explained again that he and the Deputy Clerk would have personal interests in the outcomes of any review as it could affect their terms and conditions. Their involvement in any review would need to be very limited as a result. If the committee wished to explore other external HR advice options, One Voice Wales (OVW) provided HR consultancy services and would have more information (than was available internally or elsewhere) on the staffing and pay structures of town and community councils around Wales. The costs of any such external help would need to be agreed by the Council.

Members stated that staff would need to have some involvement (e.g. they would need to describe their roles and how their job descriptions might usefully be changed). They asked staff to seek further information from OVW on the costs and components of a potential HR review and report back to the committee as soon as possible.

The Committee RESOLVED:

- (1) that the staff job descriptions are out of date and need review, as do the job evaluations and the number of staff and hours of the existing staff
- (2) that members of the committee be provided with copies of the current staff job descriptions and the job evaluation scheme used in 2017
- (3) that staff be asked to input, on how the job descriptions needed to be updated (to reflect the roles as they existed now)
- (4) to ask OVW (depending on cost) to assist the HR Committee in the new year in a review of the staff job descriptions, job evaluations and staff hours/numbers and
- (5) that special meeting(s) of the committee be held in January 2020 to consider the OVW response and next steps and potentially start work on the JD/JE/staffing review.

141. OTHER MATTERS AFFECTING STAFF

The Clerk referred to the lack of overtime paid to officers since early 2017 and the need for an overtime policy, to determine when overtime should be paid (as opposed to time off in lieu being taken). A policy had been in place in 2016 (for previous staff) but that had been forgotten and needed to be revisited.

The Deputy Clerk informed members that he was no longer the Clerk of Crickhowell.

The Clerk informed members that he was no longer undertaking acting agency work.

The Committee RESOLVED:

- (1) to note the updates
- (2) that the previous overtime policy be provided to members
- (3) that the committee review the overtime policy in January 2020.

The meeting ended at 11.45am.

Signed as a correct record by the Chair

NB these minutes are a summary of the proceedings and record of the decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim record.

Minutes produced by Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk