

# Lowestoft Town Council

## Personnel Committee

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Personnel Committee** on **27 June 2017** at 18:00 at Riverside, Waveney District Council Offices, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft NR33 0EQ

**Present:** Cllrs Neil Coleby, Nick Webb and Ian Graham

**In attendance:** Shona Bendix (Clerk)

**1. Election of the Chair**

Cllr Neil Coleby was elected Chair.

**2. Appointment of a Vice-Chair**

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that at this stage that no Vice-Chair would be appointed and that a councillor would be appointed to preside if required.

**3. Welcome and Announcement on Reporting**

Councillors noted the agenda item. There were no members of the public present.

**4. To receive and consider acceptance of apologies for absence**

It was noted that Cllr Begum had stood down from the Committee. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the extension of the numbers on this Committee should be included within the next Full Council Meeting. The Committee were particularly concerned that they no longer had a woman involved in the Committee and that there might also be under-representation in other ways.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that councillors should be given the opportunity to take part in a skills audit to assist the Council's work generally but also to help identify HR expertise and credentials and also inviting expressions of interest from women and anyone who could contribute to the diversity of the Interview Panel or other recruitment process.

**5. Declarations of Interests and dispensations**

None.

**6. Public Forum**

No members of the public present.

**7. To consider the terms of reference for the Personnel Committee**

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that a recommendation be made to Full Council that the terms of reference for the Committee should be amended as follows:

Para 6.5 to read "Overseeing the recruitment process of the Clerk and making recommendations on appointment, terms and contractual matters to the Council for all staffing."

**8. To consider setting up a Recruitment Sub-Committee**

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that a sub-committee be set up to progress the arrangements for recruitment of the Clerk and will comprise the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Personnel Committee Chair.

**9. To note the NALC publication Being A Good Employer**

The Committee noted the publication by the National Association of Local Councils.

**10. To note the NJC salary scales paper**

The Committee noted the National Joint Council salary scale award for 2016-18 payable under the terms of the NALC and SLCC model contract and noted that Lowestoft Town Council was not obliged

to adopt these terms. The Committee noted the associated National Agreement and profiles which set a framework for how to assess the appropriate salary for clerks under the NALC and SLCC system.

**11. To note the staffing budget**

The Lowestoft Town Council staffing budget had been determined as £183,000 total by Waveney District Council for the original precept calculation. The Clerk noted that, in her view, the budget for superannuation was likely to be too low to accommodate the Local Government Pension Scheme across all staff. Although Waveney District Council had intended that the budget should be sufficient to enable the Town Council to apply that Pension Scheme, it had not been envisaged that the Pension Scheme employer contribution would have increased to this extent. The Council was not obliged to apply the Local Government Scheme, the meeting noted that this was an option that they would wish to explore as part of their preparation for recommendations to Full Council.

**12. To receive information about pensions**

The Committee noted that Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) had provided the NALC Legal Topic Note 79 on staff pensions. Other sources of pension support and advice were also noted, including the Pensions Regulator, the Suffolk Pension Fund, NEST pension and private providers.

**13. To consider advice for interview panels**

An example interview advice support sheet from SALC was provided and it was noted that SALC would provide tailored advice support sheets for interview panels and would draft interview questions as a starting point for the Committee, if desired. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that the Committee would like this work to be progressed by SALC, along with a draft job description, person specification and interview plan in line with any recommendations that the Committee would be making to Full Council. This should include an appropriate shortlisting process, potentially a 'social' element with the wider Council, a timed plan, support staffing and interview processes (including a presentation) to assist the Interview Panel to make its assessment. The Clerk should ensure this is developed in consultation with the Committee members to assist their recommendation to Full Council. The Committee noted that they would be prepared to be involved in the interviewing process, as Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chair or the Personnel Committee. It was also proposed, seconded and agreed that the Committee should make a recommendation that Shona Bendix, given her SALC experience, should be on the Interview Panel.

**14. To note the need for equality and diversity training**

It was noted that the Clerk was arranging Full Council equality and diversity training. The Committee considered that this training was an essential part of the Council's risk management and it was proposed, seconded and agreed that a recommendation should be made to Full Council that attending this training should be a prerequisite for any Interview Panel and for Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Council and its Committees.

**15. To consider potential recruitment timescales**

The Committee considered the potential timeline for recruitment of the Clerk and it was proposed, seconded and agreed that the recommendation would be to work to the following timescale:

- 7 July Full: Committee recommendations to be received for consideration by Full Council.
- 14 July: Advert and application pack to be published.
- 18 August: Closing date for applications
- 22 August: Committee to meet to finalise interview process
- 7 & 8 September: First round of interviews
- 18 September: Final round of interviews
- 19 September: Recommendations to Full Council for decision on appointment of Clerk

**16. To consider potential staffing structures (not terms)**

The Committee discussed the options for staffing and included staff terms due to be discussed at Item 19, as no members of the public were present and the confidential session was not needed. It was proposed, seconded and agreed that recommendations should be made to Full Council that:

- The recruitment of the Clerk should proceed and a salary recommendation would be made to Full Council (SCP58-60 with some flexibility for an exceptional candidate).
- The recruitment of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) should also proceed, given the importance of this post and a salary recommendation would be made to Full Council (SCP37-40).
- The Clerk and RFO post should be separate posts and potentially the latter could be subsumed within a Deputy post, with an additional Deputy post, in due course, taking on, for example, project, asset and community engagement work.
- Administrative support should also be progressed in due course, with consideration to depth of cover, potentially through job-share or part-time arrangements.

**17. Next Meeting**

Within two weeks and thereafter as needed.

**18. Items for the next Agenda**

No additional items were noted at this stage.

**19. To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded from the Meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, namely employment matters relating to staffing terms and conditions.**

No members of the public were present and the meeting was not closed.

**20. Close**

The Chair closed the meeting at 19:50.

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Signed

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Date