



Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

There will be a meeting of the Human Resources Committee to be held on Tuesday 10 July 2018 at Bletchley Library, Westfield Rd, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK2 2RA commencing at 6.30 pm to transact the items of business set out in the agenda below

Delia Shephard

Delia Shephard
Clerk to Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council
4 July 2018

AGENDA

- 1 To note apologies for absence
- 2 To note members' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda
(Under the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012, made under s30 (3) of the Localism Act, members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting)
- 3 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 June 2018 on as a correct record of proceedings
- 4 To receive an update report on recruitment and selection of new members of staff
- 5 To review and approve a revised employee reference policy for recommendation to full council on 7 August 2018
- 6 To discuss the use of volunteers by the Town Council with a view to preparing a revised volunteer policy and agreement for consideration by full council

Members of the public and representatives of the media are welcome to attend but are warned that items marked with an asterisk(*) **may** involve discussion of confidential information and the council **may** resolve to exclude members of the public and press if this is deemed to be in the public interest



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Minutes of a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of the Council held at Bletchley Library, Westfield Road commencing at 6.30 pm on Tuesday 12 June 2018

Present: Cllrs Sam Browne, Keith Ely, Richard Graham, Ed Hume, Ethaniel Kelly-Wilson (Chair), Michael McDonald and Shirley Rolfe

Absent: Cllr Mohammed Rohim

In attendance: Delia Shephard, Town Clerk

Min ref

HRCCom/ Election of Chairman

2018/19-16 It was **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr Kelly Wilson as chair of the committee.

HRCCom/ Apologies for Absence

2018/19-17 Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Ely.

HRCCom/ Declarations of Interests

2018/19-18 There were no declarations of interests made by any councillor present.

HRCCom/ Minutes of Previous Meeting

2018/19-19 It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 May 2018 as a correct record of proceedings.

HRCCom/ Clerk's Briefing

2018/19-20 The committee discussed the terms of reference of the committee, the council's member/officer protocol and the council's responsibilities as an employer. Discussion was based on real life examples within the local council sector and focussed on the importance of respecting roles and responsibilities and the implications of failure to abide by employment legislation, health and safety legislation, data protection legislation in terms of risk to the council's reputation and finances. The clerk emphasised the importance of following the council's adopted procedures and preserving confidentiality in order to protect the organisation as a whole and the interests of individuals. A handout of basic guidance was made available to members.

HRCCom/ Health and Safety

2018/19-21 Since the last report to the committee on health and safety at work there had been one recorded accident at work.

Date	Team	Injury	Details
23.4.2018	Admin - Queensway	Small cut to head	Employee hit head on hand drier in Ladies WC when retrieving supplies from floor. Supplies now re-located.

The Health and Safety Action Plan continued to be progress and H&S training modules were now being delivered via the EW license agreement/on-line training courses.

External First Aid training had been arranged for four employees at Queensway (one day emergency first aid at work course) and will take place between now and the end of July. The Town Clerk is also due to renew her first aid at work certificate (three day course).

HRCCom/ Performance Appraisals

2018/19-22 A confidential written report from the clerk had been circulated in advance of the meeting which reported that appraisals for all employees for the year 2018 had been undertaken using the



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council's approved scheme. As these were the first appraisals recorded using the new scheme and as no previous individual targets had been set all employees had been assessed against the requirements of their JDs and the key performance indicators included in the scheme. It had not been possible to set future objectives based on the council's own strategic plan as none had been adopted. Therefore future objectives were based almost entirely on personal development and known training needs.

A summary of appraisal outcomes was provided and discussion followed.

The Town Clerk's own performance appraisal had not been completed but it was not yet 12 months since the previous appraisal. The appraisal had been delegated to Cllrs Kennedy and Graham because it had been conducted by Cllrs Ely and Kelly-Wilson in 2017. A report from the HR Sub-committee would follow in due course.

The appraisal process had identified the following training needs across the employee team:

- Health and safety training eg risk assessment, COSH
- Sector specific training eg ILCA/CiLCA
- Skills based training including dealing with difficult people, assertiveness and time management
- Knowledge based training eg financial and IT procedures, community consultation, event planning

Individual training plans were now being developed.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

HRCOM/
2018/19-
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Recruitment and Selection

Following full council on 5 June 2018 the clerk, Chair and Vice-chair of the council had negotiated with an employee of Wentworth Accounting and it was **RESOLVED** to authorise the clerk to issue a 12 month fixed term contract of employment to this individual on the terms negotiated which were compatible with the salary range set through the job evaluation process and approved by full council.

The clerk reported that following a recruitment procedure an offer of employment as temporary Community Building Co-ordinator had been made and accepted and the new employee would begin work on 18 June 2018 in this role. The contract involved 18 hours per week to be worked 4 hrs on each of Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday weekly and 2 hours to be fitted in flexibly according to evening meetings etc.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to set a budget of up to £1,000 per post for advertising to recruit a Support Services Manager and an Environment and Premises Manager. The clerk was delegated to prepare copy and place advertisements in consultation with members of the committee. It was agreed that at least two paid advertising channels per post would be used (eg local paper and online agency though digital means were preferred) but there would also be local advertising on noticeboards etc and the job centre would be used.

HRCOM/
2018/19-
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Revisions to Employee Contract and Employee Handbook (non-contractual)

Proposed changes to the council's employee contract and handbook had been circulated to members before the meeting. The aim of the changes was to ensure compliance with GDPR and Data Processing regulations by removing any reference to consent and specifying more information about data processing. The revised wording had been prepared by Ellis Whittam.



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It was **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed changes as laid out in the papers presented to the committee (copy in minute book).

A further amendment to Employee Handbook was discussed which involved removal of any reference to a designated smoking area for staff. The clerk advised that no current members of staff were smokers, there was no suitable designated smoking area at the new premises the council would be moving to and this seemed a sensible time to update the council's policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to amend section 2.7 Smoking of the employee hand book so that it would clearly state smoking was not permitted on council premises or whilst at work in a public place on behalf of the council. Smoking would continue to be permitted in designated break times but not on council premises.

Members also discussed the potential need to change the council's employment contract further in the light of a specific employment law case hinging on when notice of dismissal can take effect and the clerk would discuss this with EW.

HRCOM/
2018/19-
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Reference Policy

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that a new policy for provision of references for former employees would be recommended to full council. In future references would not be provided without consent of the former employee and would consist solely of confirmation of the dates of employment and the role in which the former employee was employed. The only exception would be if safeguarding or criminal matters were involved or if a reference formed part of a legal agreement.

HRCOM/
2018/19-
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Former Employee

A confidential written report on a matter concerning a former employee had been circulated to members before the meeting. It was agreed that there was now no further action for the HR Committee to take in this matter but that the previous decision of Council to authorise all applications for grant funding before they were made should be implemented.



Employment Reference Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to the provision of references to potential future employers only. For example requests for character references for legal proceedings or financial reference in connection with borrowing etc are not covered by this policy.

There are two principal reasons why an employer may request a reference on a prospective employee:

- 1 To confirm accuracy of statements made in an application for employment
- 2 To elicit opinions as to a candidate's suitability for employment

Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council is under no legal requirement to provide a reference for current or past employees however if one is given it should be a fair reflection and accurate. There is an expectation that employers will provide references and it is the Council's policy to provide references as detailed in this policy.

The provision of a reference about an employee or former employee (hereafter referred to as a worker) will generally involve disclosure of personal data and requests for references may include requests for sensitive data. This policy has been prepared using guidance contained in The Employment Practices Code published by the Information Commissioners Office and may be reviewed as further guidance is published.

References

All requests for employment references should be directed to the Town Clerk for a corporate reference to be provided on behalf of the Town Council. No other employees are authorised to issue references on behalf of the Town Council unless they have been specifically delegated to deal with this matter during the Town Clerk's absence. In the absence of an appropriately delegated employee requests for references should be directed to the Chair of the HR Committee. Employment references will not be provided without written consent from the worker concerned and it is the responsibility of the person issuing the reference to satisfy themselves that the worker wishes the reference to be provided.

With effect from 1 June 2018 the only information to be provided in an employment reference are the following:

- 1 Whether the worker was or is employed by the Town Council
- 2 The worker's current or last job title
- 3 The dates of employment at the Town Council

4 The current or final salary paid to the worker

A standard format reference is provided at Appendix A. This format will be used consistently in all cases with no exceptions save where the Council is bound by a previous legal agreement to provide a reference in an agreed form. Consistency of approach is essential in order to be fair .

All references will be provided in writing and a copy kept. Telephone references will not be provided to minimise risk.

Unsolicited references

Unsolicited references address "to whom it may concern" will not be provided by the Town Council.

Non-corporate Employment References

It is recognised that on occasion councillors and/or workers may be requested to provide personal references of various sorts for colleagues or former colleagues. The Town Council takes no responsibility for provision of such references and the Town Council's insurance policy does not cover this activity. Under no circumstances may such references be provided on Town Council headed paper, using a Town Council addresses or any other Town Council facilities and the references should clearly state that they are provided in a purely personal capacity and do not constitute a corporate reference. If in doubt about the provision of a personal reference of this type councillors are advised to consult the Town Clerk or the Chairman or alternatively Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Association of Local Councils for guidance; workers should consult their line manager for guidance and both may wish to check with their personal insurance providers to ensure they do not risk any unanticipated potential liabilities by giving a personal reference.

Subject Access Requests

All subject access requests for sight of references provided should be directed to the Town Clerk. No other employees are authorised to grant subject access requests on behalf of the Town Council unless they have been specifically delegated to deal with this during the Town Clerk's absence. In the absence of an appropriately delegated employee subject access requests in respect of references should be directed to the Chair of the HR Committee.

Subject access requests for sight of references provided will be granted although the Council will use its judgement to withhold any information which enables a third party to be identified in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Policy adopted: August 2018

Review Date: August 2022

Date

Strictly Private & Confidential

Name

Address

Address

Dear Name

Employment Reference for *Name*

Further to your recent request for a reference concerning *Name*, I am pleased to confirm details of employment with us as below.

Job Title:

Start Date:

Leaving Date:

Current/Final Salary:

Please note it is the adopted policy of this council to provide this basic information only in response to all requests for information for employment reference purposes. While all reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the truth and accuracy of the statements above neither the person providing the reference nor the council can accept any liability for errors or omissions in the reference or for any decisions based upon it.

Yours sincerely

Town Clerk