

NORTHSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL - PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
MINUTES of the committee meeting held on **10th SEPTEMBER 2024**
at The Cabin, Northstowe.

Members: 5 - Cllr Bros Sabria (Chair); Cllr Delip (Vice-Chair); Cllr Castelino; Cllr Nikoro; Cllr Susarla.
Quorum: 3 Members.
Present: 3: Cllr Bros Sabria; Cllr Delip; Cllr Susarla.
Town Clerk.
Members of the Public: 0
Apologies: Cllr Castelino; Cllr Nikoro.
Absent: N/A.

The meeting was started at 19:02; Cllr. Bros Sabria took the Chair.

11/24-25 APOLOGIES (Standing Item)

1) *To record apologies for absence received prior to the meeting.*

Apologies had been received, and accepted, from: Cllr Castelino; Cllr Nikoro.

12/24-25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Standing Item)

a) *Councillors to declare any pecuniary or personal interest in any items on the agenda.*

b) *Councillors to declare any prejudicial interest in any items on the agenda and to inform the Chair if they wish to speak on the matter during public participation.*

There were no interests declared.

13/24-25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Standing Item)

a) *To adjourn the meeting for up to 15 mins. to allow members of the public and Councillors declaring a prejudicial interest to address the meeting in relation to business to be transacted at this meeting.*

b) *To reconvene the meeting.*

No members of the public were present. The Chair reconvened the meeting.

14/24-25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Standing Item)

1) *To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 4th June 2024 as a true record of that meeting (draft minutes attached).*

It was proposed by Cllr Delip, seconded by Cllr Susarla and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 4th June 2024 as a true record of that meeting.**

15/24-25 MARKET MANAGER RECRUITMENT - UPDATE

Further to Personnel Committee 4th June 2024, item 07/24-25; Full Council 25th June '24, item 61/24-25; and Full Council 23rd July '24, item 90/24-25:

1) *Update on Market Manager recruitment; Market Manager started position on 15th August.*

A question was asked about the exit interview write-up, referred to in the minutes of the previous committee meeting; the Clerk responded that this is yet to be received. The **Clerk was tasked** to send a reminder to have this actioned.

16/24-25 PRIORITISATION COMMITTEE WORK STREAMS - UPDATE

Further to Personnel Committee 4th June 2024, item 08/24-25:

1) *To receive and consider a report with an updated prioritisation of items for future decision-making by the Personnel Committee (updated report attached).*

The updated prioritisation overview report proposals were considered and discussed. The Committee recommended that for items 'Further development of Employment Policies and Procedures' and 'Development of an Employee/HR Handbook' in the final column it could be added that 'consideration is to be given to outsource the development of this as part of a contract with a HR Service Provider.' In addition, for 'Development of the Council's approach to apprenticeships, job creation and training programmes' this is to be brought forward and could start being discussed at the January 2025 Committee meeting; with this

consideration is to be given whether creating stronger links with schools including the new Sixth Form may be feasible. The **Clerk was tasked** to update the document accordingly.

17/24-25 5-YEAR STAFFING STRUCTURE PLAN - UPDATE

Further to [Personnel Committee 5th March 2024, item 35/23-24](#) and [Full Council 26th March 2024, item 263/23-24](#):

- 1) To receive an updated five-year staffing plan (updated staffing plan proposal and report [attached](#)).
- 2) To consider the updated staffing plan proposals in light of the Council's short- and medium-term ambitions and staffing and budget needs. NB: in this also to consider business workforce planning (see [The Business Workforce Dialogue, Institute for Employment Studies; shared with Cllrs.](#)).

The updated five-year staffing plan proposals and associated motion paper were discussed. The Committee agreed with the Clerk's assessment that a shift of focus towards more time input for developing the Council's strategic direction, vision development and longer term planning would be important. The Committee agreed with the Clerk's proposal for a new member of staff, a Community Engagement Officer, to be brought in at the start of the '25-'26 financial year, to enable the Clerk to focus on more strategic and finance work in particular and to support the Clerk and Deputy Clerk in their various work duties, whilst the new person can deal with a growth in queries from residents and be involved in cross-partner reporting systems to tackle issues reported across Northstowe.

The Committee also discussed proposals for '26-'27 and beyond but commented that these plans may need to be reviewed regularly, depending on the outcomes and Council decision-making following recommendations to be made by the new Assets and Estates Manager being recruited.

The Chair brought forward item 23/24-25. The Committee agreed that this item would not need to be discussed in a closed session, although Councillors were reminded of the sensitive business data shared for this item.

23/24-25 HR CONSULTANCY SUPPORT SERVICES

- 1) To receive information about HR consultancies, with quotes for: HR advice, including legal; development and maintenance of HR handbook and policies and recruitment documentation; training and online system management options (report; quotes and associated documents [shared with Cllrs.](#)).
- 2) To consider the information received and recommend a company for decision-making at Full Council.

The committee commented that these services would be of great value to the Town Council. The Committee discussed the pros and cons of the three quotes obtained. Although all three quotes were from reputable companies and deemed good value for money, a consensus formed and the Committee was minded to go into a contract with WorkNest, for the following main reasons: The company's close affiliation and long-standing working relationships on HR legal matters with both NALC and SLCC is reassuring; the relative high number of other Parish and Town Councils who use their services; guarantee that the same people will always be allocated to the Council, therefore being able to best target the needs of the Council. It was proposed by Cllr Delip, seconded by Cllr Bros Sabria and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to recommend the HR support company WorkNest for decision-making at the next Full Council meeting.**

18/24-25 BUDGET ITEMS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR APR. 2025 – MAR. 2026

- 1) To consider budget requirements for the Personnel Committee's for the financial year '25-'26.

The **Clerk was tasked** to include in the draft '25-'26 budget appropriate costings for the following items related to business of the Personnel Committee: Staffing requirements, to be based on the latest 5-year staffing plan proposals; HR Consultancy fees; sufficient Training & Development costs.

To resolve to move into a closed session and exclude the public and press, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, due to the sensitive and/or commercial nature of business to be discussed under items 22/24-25 to 25/24-25.

It was proposed by Cllr Bros Sabria, seconded by Cllr Susarla and **RESOLVED**, unanimously, **to move into a closed session and exclude the public and press, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions**

to Meetings) Act 1960, due to the sensitive and/or commercial nature of business to be discussed under item 22/24-25.

22/24-25 RECRUITMENT OF ASSETS & ESTATES MANAGER – REVIEW POINT

Further to Full Council 23rd July '24, item 83/24-25:

1) *To receive an update from the Clerk on recruitment processes to date.*

The Clerk provided an update on the application procedures and reactions received to date.

2) *To consider the further roll-out of the timeline for recruitment, also taking into account Full Council decision-making requirements, and recommend changes where deemed necessary (latest version shared with Cllrs.).*

Based on the information provided by the Clerk relating to the quantity and quality of applications and information requests received to date, the Committee was minded to not normally extend the application window any further and advised the Clerk as such.

3) *To discuss and consider the proposals for the sifting of candidates; composition of the Interview Panel; interview processes; protocols for post-interview processes including employment contract; terms and conditions of employment; reference requests; logistics, equipment and induction (report shared with Cllrs.).*

In a discussion the merits of a one- versus two-staged interview process were discussed, as well as dates and panel membership. The **Clerk was tasked** to take the committee's recommendations into account whilst continuing to manage the application and interview processes.

Cllr Susarla left the meeting.

The Chair declared that the meeting was now not quorate and closed the meeting at 20:26 pm.

The remainder of business (items 19/24-25, 'Training and Development Policy'; item 20/24-25, 'Performance Review – Paperwork'; 21/24-25, 'Recruitment Protocols'; 24/24-25, 'Performance Management & review'; 25/24-25, 'Upcoming Legal Situation' and 26/24-25, 'Dates of Next Council meetings') is to be deferred to the next appropriate Council meeting.

Signed.....

Chair of the Personnel Committee

Date.....