



## NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam EX39 1BY

Acting Town Clerk: Guy Langton (CiLCA, PSLCC)

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### To all members of the Council:

You are hereby summoned to attend the **HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE** meeting on

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 10:0am**

at The Town Hall, Windmill Lane, Northam for the transaction of the business listed on the agenda below.

### Membership:

Cllrs Louis Bach, Hugh Brading, Barry Edwards, John Himan, Claire Hodson, Chris Leather and Jane Whittaker plus the Mayor, Cllr Niki Tait (ex-officio).

### Questions by the public

There will be a period for questions by the public. In accordance with Standing Order 3, members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of any Council business at Full Council, and at Committee meetings in respect of business on the agenda.

Anyone wishing to ask questions is requested to notify the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

### Recording, photographs and filming

In accordance with the Council's policy on filming and recording of Local Council and Committee meetings (available to read in the Chamber) and arising from the *Local Government and Accountability Act 2014* the press or public may audio-record, photograph or film meetings, or report from the meeting using social media. As such, members of the public may be recorded or photographed during the meeting. Anyone wishing to record or photograph the meeting must notify the Town Clerk before the commencement of the meeting.

### Public attendance at Council and committee meetings

As a public body, Northam Town Council understands the need for transparency and accountability. The Council will therefore seek to conduct meetings using practices and procedures set out within the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, which states:

*Subject to subsection (2)\* below, any meeting of a body exercising public functions, being a body to which this Act applies, shall be open to the public.*

Subsection (2) states:

*Where a meeting is open to the public, a body may, by resolution exclude the public from the meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings; and where such a resolution is passed, this Act shall not require the meeting to be open to the public during proceedings to which the resolution applies.*

Therefore, the Council's policy is to allow public access to meetings unless the business being transacted is confidential or there are 'other special reasons' to exclude the public.

*Guy Langton*

Guy Langton, Acting Town Clerk

Date of issue: 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024

## **AGENDA**

- 1 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)** *All apologies must be notified to the Town Council offices by 5pm on the day of the meeting.*
- 2 Chair's announcements**
- 3 To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests** *Members are reminded that all interests must be declared prior to the item being discussed.*
- 6 To agree the agenda as published.**
- 7 To consider the minutes of the meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024**  
*Note: action points will be considered at the next meeting of this committee.*
- 8 Public Participation**  
*Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 4 minutes. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed 20 minutes.*
- 9 To consider the report arising from the staffing review carried out by Worknest and its recommendations, as proposed at section 9** (confidential report and supporting papers).

**Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Human Resources committee meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 10.30am in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.**

Present: Cllrs Bach, Brading, Edwards, Hodson, Leather, Whittaker, and the Mayor, Cllr Tait.

In attendance: Guy Langton – Acting Town Clerk.

**2405/058 To elect a Chair for the committee.**

Cllr Hodson took the Chair to open the meeting.

Cllr Bach proposed Cllr Hodson be Chair of the committee, the nomination was seconded by Cllr Tait. There were no other nominations.

There were no abstentions or votes against and Cllr Hodson was duly elected Chair of the committee.

**2405/059 To elect a Deputy Chair for the committee.**

Cllr Hodson proposed Cllr Bach be Deputy Chair of the committee, the nomination was seconded by Cllr Whittaker. There were no other nominations.

There were no abstentions or votes against and Cllr Bach was duly elected.

**2405/060 To receive and approve apologies for absence, in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)**

Cllr Himan tender his apologies, the reason for which was approved.

**2405/061 Chair's Announcements**

The Chair welcomed the members to this newly formed committee.

**2405/062 To receive any dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests**

Members were reminded that all interests must be declared prior to the item being discussed.

**2405/063 To agree the agenda as published**

It was **resolved** to agree the agenda as published.

Proposed Cllr Bach, Seconded Cllr Brading (all in favour)

**2405/064 To note the Terms of Reference for the Committee**

The terms of reference, as agreed at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024, were noted.

**2405/065 Public Participation**

*Members of the public are permitted to make representations, answer questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Each member of the public is entitled to speak once only in respect of business itemised on the agenda and shall not speak for more than 4 minutes. The period of time which is designated for public participation in accordance with standing orders shall not exceed 20 minutes.*

There were no members of the public present.

**2405/066 To note the outstanding actions arising from the HR sections of the predecessor committee and consider:**

- i. Establishing a working group to review the office accommodations and investigate audio and visual improvements to the Chamber.

It was agreed to split the action into two parts:

1. the Council Chamber's acoustics
2. the wider office accommodation.

It was **resolved** to investigate ways of improving the clarity of audio in the Council Chamber, to include speakers, echo-blocking installations and the wider acoustics and address the wider office accommodation when the Council's staffing situation had become clear.

Proposed: Cllr Whittaker, Seconded: Cllr Hodson (all in favour).

Chair's initials

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- 2405/067 To note the staff volunteering to have their names added to the out of hours alarm response register.**  
The committee thanked Rob Griffey, Dean Stewardson and Tina Tucker for volunteering to be added to the register.  
**Action points:**  
**Write to staff to formally thank them.**  
**Add the staff to the register held by the alarm company.**
- 2405/068 To receive an update on the accidents recorded in the accident book since 1<sup>ST</sup> April 2024**  
It was noted that there had been no accidents recorded in the accident book since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.
- 2405/069 To consider the effect on the General Election on the Council's office-based staff**  
The Acting Town Clerk reported that the Council Offices would be used as a polling station for the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2024 General Election. He had discussed the matter with the elections team at the District Council. It was agreed that Northam Town Council could continue to operate from the Council Offices, which would be closed to the public for the day.
- 2405/070 To consider making a recommendation to Finance Committee that the Council engage an outside payroll provider**  
The committee considered the report in detail. It was noted that Torridge District Council only offered this service to very small Parish Councils, Northam Town Council, with a payroll headcount of 23, would be considered too large. The merits of using a local provider against using a sector specialist were considered.  
It was noted that the cost of a payroll provider was similar to the cost of carrying the task out in-house.  
It was noted that in order to ensure payroll was run at the correct time each month and outsourcing it would be beneficial to the Council's operations and provide an element of cover should key staff be absent from the Council for extended periods.  
It was **resolved** to outsource payroll provision to *dck accounts*, a sector specialist, at an estimated cost of £780 per annum.  
Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (all in favour)
- 2405/071 To receive a report into the accumulated TOIL hours across the staff**  
The number of TOIL hours accumulated across all staff was noted. The May Fair had, as anticipated, resulted in significant hours being accumulated, taking up to 12 hours of staff time on the day, from road closure before the start to opening the road at the end of the day.  
It was noted that the Acting Town Clerk was accumulating significant hours, with a total of 73 hours to the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024.  
It was noted that as the Council recruited into the vacant positions, the requirement for extra-time working should reduce.  
It was **resolved** to recommend to the Finance committee that the Acting Town Clerk be paid 37 hours of accumulated TOIL in the June payroll.  
Proposed: Cllr Hodson, Seconded: Cllr Brading (all in favour).  
**Action point:**  
**Include the matter on the Finance agenda for June 2024.**

Chair's initials

**2405/072 To consider which members should conduct the outstanding staff appraisal for 2023-24**

It was noted that the appraisal process would be reviewed at a future meeting of this committee.

It was **resolved** to ask Cllr Hames and Cllr Hodson, with the Acting Town Clerk, to conduct the outstanding staff appraisal.

Proposed: Cllr Tait, Seconded: Cllr Whittaker (all in favour).

**Action point:**

**Include a review of the annual appraisal process on a future agenda.**

**2405/073 To consider the report arising from the staffing review carried out by Worknest**

The Chair opened the discussion noting that the report had been drafted by Clare Mellor of Worknest, an HR advisor who had carried out the previous staffing review in 2020 and had experience and knowledge of the Council’s operations and requirements. She had attended the Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> May, having been provided with relevant documents in advance. On the 17<sup>th</sup> May, Clare had meetings with all staff and a group of Councillors.

The committee discussed the report in detail, noting typographical errors, and the points it raised regarding succession planning and the wider staffing structure.

It was **resolved** to recommend to special meeting of the Full Council that the succession planning advised in the report was implemented.

Proposed: Cllr Tait, Seconded: Cllr Brading (all in favour)

**Action point:**

**Arrange a special Full Council meeting at a date yet to be agreed.**

The staffing structure and any resulting changes to staff contracts, job descriptions and duties, and remuneration were discussed at length.

The relationship between this item and the next item regarding the model staff contract was noted.

The need to attract and retain suitable staff was noted, along with clear succession planning and cover for staff should there be prolonged absences.

It was **resolved** to arrange a special meeting of this committee to focus on staff roles and structure.

Proposed: Cllr Leather, Seconded: Cllr Brading (all in favour).

**Action point:**

**Arrange a special meeting of the Human Resources committee for 10:00 on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024.**

*Cllr Whittaker left at this point (12:20pm)*

**2405/074 To consider the annotated contract of employment**

The committee discussed the annotated contract, noting that a number of the standard clauses would be contrary to the Council’s agreed custom and practice.

It was agreed to review an un-annotated version at the special committee meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Action points:**

**Prepare a clean model contract and include consideration of the staff contract on the special HR committee meeting agenda.**

**Circulate the current (2023-24) pay scale, The current scale points of all staff (effective 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024) and the scale ranges and ranges to accompany the papers for the special meeting agenda.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1:00pm.

Signed.....Dated.....

Chair’s initials