

MINUTES
of the online HR Committee
held on Monday 21st December 2020 at 7.00pm

Membership:

Cllr Brett (East)*	Cllr Nicklin (West) *
Cllr Fraser (West)*	Cllr Robbins (East)A Chairman
Cllr Jeffries (Copheap) * Vice-Chairman	Vacancy
Cllr Macfarlane (West)*	

Key: * Present A Apologies AB Absent

In attendance:

Officers: Fiona Fox, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

HR/20/032 Apologies for absence

Were received and accepted from Cllr Robbins.

HR/20/033 Declarations of Interest

None.

HR/20/034 Minutes

20/034.1 The minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on the 30th November 2020; copies of these minutes had been circulated and Standing Order 12.1 provided that they may therefore be taken as read.

Resolved: Approved

20/034.2 Matters arising from the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 30th November 2020. **None.**

HR/20/035 Chairman's Announcements

None.

HR/20/036 Questions

No questions from members of the committee had been submitted to the clerk in advance of the meeting.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow for public participation.

HR/20/037 Public Participation

There were no petitions, deputations or statements.

Standing Orders were reinstated following public participation.

HR/20/038 Health and Safety

The clerk reported that she had concluded her appraisals and that line managers were now continuing with their direct reports.

At this point the clerk advised members that Cllr Davis was messaging to say that he was still trying to enter the meeting and asked for a link to be sent. The clerk had called Cllr Davis several times via MSTeams but he had been unable to connect. The chairman suspended the meeting whilst the clerk tried to find a work around to the problem, including opening the members invitation to add Cllr Davis. This was not possible as the meeting had already 'gone live', and the clerk had not sent the original invite. Members decided that all reasonable attempts had been made to enter the member into the meeting and they agreed to re-start. The chairman was also in contact with Cllr Davis, apprising him of the efforts being made to resolve the situation.

19:13 the meeting re-started.

HR/20/039 Health and Safety Report

There were no questions from members, who noted the report.

HR/20/040 National Living Wage

Published on the 1st December 2020, members were advised that the National Living Wage would increase from next year, April 2021, to £8.91 per hour from £8.72 currently. This represented a 2.2% increase.

The age bracket for the full National Living Wage was to be reduced for the first time to include 23- and 24-year olds.

The increases in full were:

- Age 25 and over: currently £8.72 per hour to £8.91 per hour (2.2%)
- 23 & 24 years old: currently £8.20 also to £8.91 per hour (8.65%)
- 21 & 22 years old: currently £8.20 per hour to £8.36 an hour (2.0%)
- 18 & 19 years old: currently £6.45 per hour to £6.56 per hour (1.7%)

Members were advised that this increase had been included in the preliminary budget and it particularly, but not exclusively, affected the

council's seasonal staff. **Members noted.**

HR/20/041 Communications

None.

Confidential session pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies Admission to Meetings) Act 1960; the Council, by resolution, may exclude the public from a 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.

HR/20/042 Staffing Matters

20/042.1 The HR Committee held on 30 November 2020 considered several new posts for inclusion within the 21/22 budget proposal. A resolution was not reached in this area and the HR Committee requested that a Working Group was established to:

- look at the posts in more detail
- understand if the posts were required
- suggest any changes and,
- make recommendations and report back to the HR Committee on the 21 December 2020.

Members received the confidential report from the HR working group.

The posts discussed were one part-time Climate Change Officer, one part-time Committee Clerk, one part-time Estates Administrator and two part-time CCTV Operatives (one of these posts was a reinstatement).

Members agreed that each post should be considered in two parts.

- Part 1: to determine/justify the need and to robustly challenge, including has the need been sufficiently established?
- Part 2: to determine the timing of recruitment, at what point should that need commence, which may not be immediate, it could be phased. Either way budget provision was necessary.

Of note, members agreed that the current hours worked over contracted hours were indicative of the levels of additional work the council was currently placing on officers. Almost all the additional hours were worked servicing the committee structure and working groups and this pressure had to be relieved. It was further agreed that the council had a duty of care and responsibility not to overload officers, acknowledging that this could take its toll. It was noted that any overtime payments made to staff were at their normal rate.

Each post was considered in turn and included discussions around current staff and staffing issues.

Climate Change Officer. The Working Group recommended broadening this role and changing the title to Community and Climate Officer. It was acknowledged that during COVID#1 lockdown, and in line with the council's strategy, it needed an officer dedicated to community engagement, and that combining this with climate would provide a broader community interface. A dedicated officer would have the time to seek funding for climate initiatives and could take on current council community projects such as cycling and as we move out of COVID, revive other projects such as community speed watch. A robust debate took place with a member suggesting that whilst the council had taken responsibility for the green agenda, the committee should look at the speed of other commitments and now say pause, hold this appointment. **It was proposed that the role should be budgeted, but recruitment would not be immediately after the start of the new financial year.**

Committee Clerk: members agreed that the pressure of habitual work over contracted hours had to be released, and this evening had demonstrated that several staff members were needed to run a meeting. **It was proposed that this role should be budgeted, and that recruitment should be as soon as possible to start in the new financial year.**

Estates Administrator: The Working Group noted that In 2016 the Council made the decision to take on assets from Wiltshire Council, this set a direction of travel which continued with the play areas last year, and a commitment to take on further services and assets. In September 2020 the Council resolved to bring in house five significant contracts. These additions to the Council's portfolio have resulted in steadily increasing numbers of calls, queries, supplier liaison and administration, which has grown beyond the capacity of current staff to deliver. This requires a dedicated role to learn and take responsibility for the day to day administration of outdoor services, and whilst the position may not be required straight away, when services are devolved, we will need to recruit the post. **It was noted that this post was funded from the rolled over services to be devolved budget, but recruitment would not start until H2 of financial year 2021 – 2022.**

Two part-time CCTV Operatives: The Working Group informed members that current staffing levels had dropped several years ago and had to be increased to secure the continuation of the service. **It was proposed that this role should be budgeted, and that recruitment should be as soon as possible to start in the new financial year.**

It was proposed that the committee approve all the recommendations placed before them by the Working Group and that the committee had demonstrated both the need and the timing.

**Proposed: Cllr Nicklin Seconded: Cllr Fraser
4 in favour, 1 abstention.**

20/043.2 Decision HR20/033.1 refers and the budget was agreed.

20/044.3 Members noted the contents of the Clerk's confidential report.

**The next scheduled meeting for this committee is:
Monday 8th February 2021, 7pm, online.**

Minutes from this meeting will be available to all members of the public either from our web site www.warminster-tc.gov.uk or by contacting us at Warminster Civic Centre.