



# Bracknell Town Council

## Staffing Tuesday, November 19, 2024

Date	<b>Tuesday, November 19, 2024</b>
Time	<b>18:30 - 19:30</b>
Location	<b>Council Chamber Brooke House</b>
Present	<b>Anna Keen, Mary Temperton, Elizabeth Baker, Roy Bailey, Cath Thompson, Donna Sidebotham (Sub).</b>
Apologies	CLlr Simon Carter
Officers	Jackie Burgess Town Clerk (TC)

## Minutes

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### **S45 ATTENDANCE**

**/ 24** Apologies were received from Councillor S Carter

### **S46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**/ 24** There were no declarations of interest from the Councillors, and no written requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests were received. It was confirmed that there were no members of the public or press present, allowing the meeting to proceed with the confidential business segment. The committee moved to exclude the press and public from the meeting, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as applied by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

### **S47 MINUTES**

**/ 24** The minutes of the last meeting held on 10th September 2024 were presented for approval by the Chair of the meeting Councillor Anna Keen as a true record. Councillor Temperton seconded and all Councillors agreed. The minutes were approved as a true record.

### **S48 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

**/ 24** The committee agreed that any outstanding issues had been addressed or were to be discussed under the relevant agenda items.

### **S49 RECRUITMENT**

**/ 24**

The recruitment process to replace a retiring member of staff, did not yield satisfactory results. Consequently, the decision was made not to recruit at this time. Officers plan to restart the recruitment process in December 2024, with interviews scheduled for

January 2025. The aim is to tighten the timeline between advertising the position and conducting interviews to avoid losing potential candidates.

The member of Staff, who is retiring in January, has been successfully replaced by a new tractor driver recruited in the summer. The new recruit has proven to be an excellent addition to the team.

The TC also reported that the hire of a Monday To Friday member of staff at Great Hollands Pavilion, has been a great success with the new employee engaging well with the community through various activities, including messy play and planned Christmas events.

**Task:** Restart the recruitment process in December with interviews scheduled for January.

## **S50 TRAINING**

**/ 24**

The committee reviewed the comprehensive list of completed and scheduled training for staff. Training has been conducted both in-house and in collaboration with outside organisations including Wokingham Town Council and BFC, where sharing the cost of trainers is beneficial to all. New hires, to the Grounds Team, are scheduled for playground inspection training next week. The collaboration has been beneficial, and plans are in place for health and safety training for the two foremen in January. The committee emphasized the importance of practical training tailored to the needs of the staff, especially for those who are not inclined towards classroom learning.

## **S51 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**/ 24**

The TC provided several updates on health and safety matters. One ground staff member has had multiple vehicle accidents within a few months, leading to the decision to enroll them on a specialized driver training course in December. The committee discussed the challenges of managing vehicle operations and the importance of proper training. Another incident involved chainsaw work that resulted in a broken vehicle window, following an investigation a letter of warning was issued to one member of staff, where it was found they had failed to carry out an inspection following the incident, which was a dereliction of duty. The committee acknowledged the need for diligent supervision to prevent such accidents. The collaboration with BrightHR to review health and safety policies and risk assessments is ongoing, with a focus on improving overall safety standards.

## **S52 STAFFING MATTERS**

**/ 24**

The TC updated the committee on various staffing matters. Following the outcome of a grievance, the member of staff went off sick but has now expressed a desire to return to work. However, due to recent personal circumstances and his mental state, the TC decided they were not ready to return to work and has arranged for an occupational health assessment. The committee discussed the complexities of managing returns to work and ensuring employees well-being.

The final pay award from the LGA, implemented in October and backdated to April 2024, was also discussed. The staff received a pay increase, which was well-received, especially with the back pay arriving before Christmas. The increase was £1290 per pay scale which was equivalent to 5.5% on the lower pay scales sliding to 25% on the higher scales.

**S53 ABSENCE REPORT**

**/ 24** The committee reviewed the staff absence report, noting several long-term absences due to serious health conditions. The committee compared the absence rates with national averages, acknowledging the higher rates but understanding the specific reasons behind the current absences (Individual cases were discussed). Efforts to manage and support staff through their health challenges were discussed, with an emphasis on maintaining morale and well-being. The TC was requested to investigate if it was possible to do a comparison over the last three years of absence levels.

**S54 APPRAISALS**

**/ 24** The committee discussed appraisals, noting that all appraisals have been conducted this year. The next round of appraisals will commence in March 2025, including the Deputy Town Clerk's appraisal. The appraisal process is described as thorough and collaborative, promoting good feedback and discussion. The committee emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive and supportive work environment through regular and constructive appraisals.

**Date of the next Meeting: 21<sup>st</sup> January 2025 6.30 pm Council Chamber Brooke House**

Sign:

Date: