

PRUDHOE TOWN COUNCIL
DRAFT Report of the HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING, held virtually, via
Zoom at 7:00 pm on Wednesday 21st APRIL 2021

The agenda and associated papers for the meeting were published on-line on Wednesday 14th April 2021 and the meeting was open for members of the public to attend, except for confidential items.

PRESENT

Cllr Russ Greig (Chair), Cllr Tracy Gilmore, Cllr Chris Cuthbert, Cllr Chris Barrett, Cllr Jennifer McGee, Cllr Gerry Price

HR2021/010 Welcome by the Chair

Cllr Russ Greig welcomed everyone to the meeting and acknowledged that it was some time since the HR Committee had met.

HR2021/011 Apologies for Absence

None received.

HR2021/012 Declarations of Interest None

HR2021/013 Dispensations None

HR2021/014 Draft Report of the HR Committee Meeting, held on 7th October 2020

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the report as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr Jennifer McGee Seconded: Cllr Chris Cuthbert

HR2021/015 Clerk's Report

It was **AGREED to RECEIVE** the following Clerk's Report:

Town Council Roles

Following the recommendation of the HR and the agreement of the full Council, the Clerk updated the Town Councillor webpage to include information relating to the Councillors role. This included a link to the 'Promoting Democracy Booklet' produced by the Clerk as part of CiLCA, a link to legal references applicable to Cllrs and a summary of the key elements of the role of Cllr.

<https://www.prudhoetowncouncil.gov.uk/t-councillors/>

Powers and Duties in regards 'spending' were updated on the Council's website.

<https://www.prudhoetowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PTC-Powers-and-duties-of-local-councils.pdf>

The Role of the Mayor

Although the HR Committee discussed and agreed the suitability of a mayor's page to centralise publicity relating to the function of the mayor, this was not agreed by full council.

Cllr Chris Cuthbert thanked the Clerk for the work carried out in this area and for ensuring the website was updated as agreed.

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Communications and Public Relations Policy

The HR Committee recommended that a formalised policy on communications and PR was needed. Whilst this was agreed by full council, there was no consensus as to the directive. In view that any policy will result in limitations on members, the Clerk is unable to draft a policy without further guidance and agreement.

Social Media and Email Policy

The Clerk updated Regulations and Procedures on the Town Council website to include the NCC Guidance on the use of social media by members.

<https://www.prudhoetowncouncil.gov.uk/administration/regulations-procedures/>

Town Council Staffing

The HR Committee resolved to look at staffing again in advance of the budget. When the budget was being considered, it was agreed that the role of Events and Administration Assistant would not be recruited in 2021/22.

Following the Annual Meeting of the Council, the Clerk intends to encourage an emphasis on forward planning. This will allow the HR Committee to assess staffing needs as the Council moves through the next term.

Holiday Cover

The next extended period of leave for the Clerk (i.e., not just a day or two) is requested from 22nd July for two weeks. The agenda for the July OM would be put out by the Clerk and cover for the meeting can be provided by the Clerk for Hexham (as I covered a meeting for Hexham). This would require that the PCW's meeting in August, be held on the 3rd rather than the 2nd Wednesday.

HR2021/016 Office Lone Working Consideration

Members discussed aspects of lone working within the office environment and outside of the office and referred to the Financial and Management Risk Assessment.

The measures already in place were included in the Financial and Management Risk Assessment and the Clerk advised that a common sense approach is used when inviting people into the office and meeting people outside of the office.

Other measures suggested included the following:

- Updating Outlook calendar when meeting people
- Window in office door so staff can see those visiting before they enter and other users can see inside the office, in case of accident/emergency.
- Panic alarms.
- Video doorbell.
- Staff and Cllrs ensuring they leave the building at night with another.
- Apps like sky guard when out of office, but on-site.

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It was **AGREED** the Clerk would look at the feasibility of the options suggested.

HR2021/017 Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was **AGREED to approve** a motion to invoke Standing Order 2d) to exclude the press and public, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, permitted under schedule (12A) Local Government Act 1972.

The Clerk also left the meeting.

HR2021/018 Annual Leave Entitlement

It was **AGREED** to recommend that Annual Leave for Town Council staff be increased to 22 days (+3 additional days following 5 years' service) in line with the National Joint Council (NJC) and Local Government Service Agreement.

HR2021/019 Performance Appraisal

Cllr Russ Greig and Cllr Tracy Gilmore gave an update of the Clerk's appraisal, carried out on 9th April 2021.

It was **AGREED** the Clerk had exceeded expectations.

HR2021/020 Salary Review

Members discussed the salary of the Clerk and considered progression from LC3 (below substantive range) to LC3 (substantive range).

It was **AGREED** 'in principle' to put forward the recommendation to progress the Clerk's salary point from LC3 (below substantive) to LC3 (substantive), which would be backdated to 1st April 2021.

The HR Committee requested examples of the Clerk's Job Role that gave evidence of working in the LC3 (substantive) profile. Cllr Greig made clear that the salary review related to the role of the Clerk, rather than the performance of the Clerk.

It was **AGREED** that the HR Committee would review the information received before making a recommendation.