

# STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL

## HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

18 February, 2020

### Town Clerk's Open Report

1) Terms of Reference - Calendar of Reviews

- **To approve and adopt**

A Calendar of Reviews is identified within the HR Committee's Terms of Reference which assists the Town Clerk and Chairman with compiling the appropriate HR Committee agenda throughout the year to ensure that things are not overlooked.

Outlined below is the proposed Calendar of Reviews which can be observed on an ongoing basis providing the number of meetings remains at three per annum:

Date	HR CALENDAR
February	If necessary, review of 1.1 to advise on staffing levels
	Review of clause 1.2 the job description of: Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk GP/Planning Clerk and PA to the Town/Deputy Clerks Council Chaplain
	If necessary, the review of clause 1.3 the grading, remuneration and terms of employment of all Council employees
	If necessary, the review of clause 1.4 and 1.5 on the appointment or dismissal of the Beadle and Macebearers
	Recommendation of appointment of Council's Chaplain in accordance with clause 1.6
	Review of clause 1.7 leave entitlements, sickness management, statutory entitlements, special leave and TOIL
	If necessary, the review of 1.8 to make recommendations on staffing related expenditure to the Finance Committee
	If necessary, the review of 1.10 to manage the dismissal and appointment process of the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk
	Any unforeseen issues relating to the wellbeing of the staff
	Review Terms of Reference in accordance with clause 1.14
	Any matters to be brought forward as determined at a previous meeting

<b>July</b>	If necessary, review of 1.1 to advise on staffing levels
	Review of clause 1.2 the job description of: Event Supervisor/Housekeeper Civic Officer Finance Clerk
	If necessary, the review of clause 1.3 the grading, remuneration and terms of employment of all Council employees
	If necessary, the review of clause 1.4 and 1.5 on the appointment or dismissal of the Beadle and Macebearers
	Review of clause 1.7 leave entitlements, sickness management, statutory entitlements, special leave and TOIL
	If necessary, review of 1.8 on staffing related expenditure
	If necessary, the review of 1.10 to manage the dismissal and appointment process of the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk
	If necessary to oversee any process leading up to the possible dismissal of staff, including redundancy in accordance with clause 1.11
	Review clause 1.12 to ensure that all grievance and disciplinary procedures are dealt with in line with Council procedures
	Any unforeseen issues relating to the wellbeing of the staff
	Any matters to be brought forward as determined at a previous meeting
<b>October</b>	If necessary, review of 1.1 to advise on staffing levels
	Review of clause 1.2 the job description of Cemetery and Town Hall Booking Co-ordinator Open Spaces Foreman Open Spaces Operatives
	If necessary, the review of clause 1.3 the grading, remuneration and terms of employment of all Council employees
	If necessary, the review of clause 1.4 and 1.5 on the appointment or dismissal of the Beadle and Macebearers
	Review of clause 1.7 leave entitlements, sickness management, statutory entitlements, special leave and TOIL
	If necessary, review of 1.8 on staffing related expenditure
	Review of clause 1.9 Performance Management following Appraisals
	If necessary, the review of 1.10 to manage the dismissal and appointment process of the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk
	Review clause 1.13 the Council's health, safety, welfare and equal opportunities policies to ensure they are adequate and compliant
	Any unforeseen issues relating to the wellbeing of the staff
	Any matters to be brought forward as determined at a previous meeting

Although the review of the Chaplain's Job Description appears in the February calendar, it is not being submitted for consideration at the HR Committee Meeting on 18 February, 2020 as this was reviewed and approved at the last HR Committee Meeting when the position of Mayor's Chaplain/Council's Chaplain was discussed and the Job Description approved.

However, going forward, a review should occur at the February meeting in order to bring an appointment recommendation to Council prior to Mayor Making.

2) Staffing Levels (Terms of Reference 1.1)

- **To consider the implications of implementing NDP TC Project 1**

Currently, Council has a full complement of staff and there is no requirement to reduce or increase this complement.

However, in terms of realising the delivery of the pledge made in the Neighbourhood Development Plan, thought must be given to determine who will be responsible for co-ordinating the partnership and the administration, particularly if it is planned that meetings will take place outside normal working hours.

Council should not under-estimate the commitment that will be required.

**Town Centre**

**TC Project 1 - Town Centre Strategic Partnership**

*The Town Council should be responsible for setting up the Town Centre Strategic Partnership which should include representatives of the three local authorities (Warwickshire County Council, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council), the RSC, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the Town Trust and Stratforward.*

3) Review of Job Descriptions (Terms of Reference 1.2)

- **To review the job descriptions of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and GP/Planning Clerk & Assistant to the Town Clerk**

It has been agreed by the HR Committee that the job descriptions of all staff are reviewed on an annual basis.

Attached as **Appendix 'A'** is the job description of the Town Clerk, **Appendix 'B'**, that of the Deputy Town Clerk, and **Appendix 'C'**, the GP/Planning Clerk.

The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk's job descriptions have been reviewed by the incumbents. The Town Clerk has made no alteration to her job description, but the suggested additions and amendments to the Deputy's has been highlighted and emboldened, as is the case with the GP/Planning Clerk's job description.

4) Review of Terms of Reference (Terms of Reference 1.14)

- **To approve and adopt the Terms of Reference**

The Committee's Terms of Reference are attached as **Appendix 'D'**. It is RECOMMENDED that these be approved and adopted without amendment as they remain constant and fit for purpose.

5) Review of Leave (Terms of Reference 1.6)

5.1 **Leave Entitlement - General**

- **To note the report**

Invariably, employees like to retain a little annual leave throughout the year in case of emergencies, which results in March being a very popular month for staff holidays as they try to take their remaining holiday entitlement before the year end of 31 March. Only in exceptional circumstances is it permitted for leave to be carried over into the next fiscal year.

This March is no exception, with practically every member of staff taking leave next month. However, absences have been managed to ensure there is sufficient cover in the office and cemetery.

Currently, the Town Clerk has seven days annual leave entitlement remaining, and this will be taken as odd days during March.

#### 5.4 Extended Leave

- **To consider the proposal to grant extended leave**

This issue relates to annual leave but is very much combined with another agenda item – the wellbeing of staff. In general, Council employees are expected to curtail their leave to no more than two weeks at a time. However, these days long distance travel is becoming more popular and it is not unusual for people to travel vast distances to Australia or New Zealand. The time involved in travelling and the costs involved make such a journey almost prohibitive if limited to a time frame of 14 days.

The Town Clerk did give permission for a member of the Open Spaces team to have a three week consecutive holiday in 2017 in order to visit relations in Australia. Permission was granted once the Foreman had given his firm assurance that the employee's absence would not affect the effectiveness and productivity of the department in the long term, and it did not.

The Council also has another member of staff whose daughter is residing and working in Australia at present. This employee may well seek permission for an extended break at a mutually convenient time of year in order to visit her, although to date, no such formal approach has been made, and indeed it may never be forthcoming.

It is noteworthy that not so long ago, Council lost a well-respected Officer who resigned their position in order to take an extended break in Australia and New Zealand which was to last longer than eight weeks.

Today leave of absence is granted to particular sectors in the form of a sabbatical, which is quite extensive and common in the academic and ecclesiastical world. Although the Council is not being asked to consider granting sabbaticals which may well last longer than six months, it would be appreciated if they could give thought to granting leave of absence that goes beyond the normal two week period providing:

- Satisfactory cover is available to ensure the office/open spaces is adequately manned during their absence;
- Any meetings they clerk and are responsible for are properly facilitated;

- That the timing of the leave remains at the convenience of Council as determined by the Town Clerk, and if inconvenient, the leave may be refused;
- They have adequate outstanding leave available to accommodate their absence;
- Extensive leave beyond two consecutive weeks will only be permitted to each employee once during the annual leave period of 1 April to 31 March, unless there are mitigating circumstances;
- Other than in exceptional circumstances, extensive leave will only be granted to those employees who have served five or more years with the Council.

If the Committee agrees with this proposal, members are requested to determine what they consider constitutes 'extended leave' in terms of the time scale. The Town Clerk should be permitted to authorise leave not exceeding the set time scale as a matter of course, without having to refer the matter to Committee. Only requests for leave of absence beyond that time limit would be deferred to Committee and considered piece meal.

#### 6) Council's Chaplain – Stipend

- **To review the Chaplain's honorarium payment**

At the HR Committee Meeting on 15 October, 2019 it was AGREED that the stipend for the Council's Chaplain would be discussed at the meeting in February, 2020.

At present, the position of Mayor's Chaplain attracts an annual honorarium payment of £455.60 per annum. Undertaking a financial review of a position requires the comparison of the duties involved, as detailed in the Job Description. The Chaplain's Job Description is attached as **Appendix 'E'**.

As part of the research for this paper, the Town Clerk contacted her colleagues on the SLCC email forum to enquire whether their Council appointed a Chaplain and if so, were they paid an honorarium:

Council	Appointed by Council	Appointed by Mayor	Stipend Paid
Falmouth		Discretionary	No
Folkstone		Discretionary	No
Weston-super-Mare		Discretionary	No
Welshpool		Discretionary	No
Hereford City Council	Yes		No
Banbury		Discretionary	No
Knutsford		Yes	No
Royal Leamington Spa		Discretionary	No

From the responses it is clear that none of the Chaplains receive payment for their services (many responded that *'it was considered an honour to be appointed'*), as was the case at STC up until 2015. However, it appears their duties are not as extensive as those required by Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council's Chaplain, whose role now focuses more towards wellbeing and pastoral care rather than just appearing for the prayer at the start of a Council Meeting, at the Civic Dinner and the occasional address at a civic event which includes Remembrance.

Members will be aware that the Town Council Budget for 2020/2021 was AGREED at the Town Council Meeting on 28 January, 2020. An increase in the stipend of the Chaplain, or for that matter, any other honorarium personnel, was not included.

Therefore, it would be difficult to award an increase at this point in time, although there is very slight 'wriggle room' in the Management Charge budget for exceptional circumstances.

However, members will recall that at the October 2019 meeting of the HR Committee, a proposal to factor in a suggested government 3.5% cost of living salary increase for staff was recommended to the Finance & Scrutiny Committee and included in the budget. It is noteworthy that the Local Government Association is still negotiating the settlement with the government and nothing has been agreed as yet. If an increase is awarded this will take effect from 1 April, 2020 or backdated if a settlement is not reached prior to this date.

Any increase in the salaries of Council employees is effective across the board and the stipends of all honorarium personnel, which include the Chaplain, will be adjusted accordingly in line with the settlement.