

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL
PERSONNEL PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION
29 June, 2021

Town Clerk's Open Report

1) Terms of Reference - Calendar of Reviews - Terms of Reference 4.24)

- **To approve and adopt**

Since the change to the committee structure, it became necessary to review the terms of reference of the various committees to identify an appropriate calendar for reviews which assists the Town Clerk and Chairman with compiling agendas throughout the year to ensure that repeated or standard issues are not overlooked.

Attached as **Appendix 'A'** is the proposed calendar for the Personnel Committee which can be observed on an ongoing basis providing the number of meetings remains at three per annum.

Since the change to the committee structure was only implemented in late September, 2020, the Terms of Reference for the Personnel Committee, attached as **Appendix 'B'** remain up to date and fit for purpose and it is recommended that these are approved and adopted.

2) Review of Job Descriptions (Terms of Reference 4.2)

- **To approve the Job Descriptions of:**
Event Supervisor/Housekeeper
Civic Officer
Finance & Facilities Clerk

The staff have more understanding of the relatively new committee structure and in general, the Civic Officer continues to deal with the mayoral/civic agenda, whereas the previous General Purposes Committee/PCC Clerk works admirably within the remit of the new Community Services Committee.

There are certain responsibilities within the new structure which do not sit comfortably with the incumbent clerk who 'inherited' a service or facility that they are unfamiliar with, a prime example being the market operation which is now overseen by Civic Heritage & Events.

When situations occur such as this, the clerk previously responsible for, in this case, the market and who still clerks the Market Forum, would assist in the research and writing of the report and whilst remote meetings were permissible, would often be available to attend the meeting for that particular agenda item.

As members were made aware at the time of the committee structure change, the clerk in attendance may not have the knowledge gained from past experience, so it is vital that members really scrutinise the agenda and report in advance of the meeting and should any questions arise, contact officers prior to the meeting, so the clerk has enough time to ascertain the relevant information which they can convey to everyone during the actual meeting.

The revised job descriptions of the Council's employees are used as the basis for discussion at the annual appraisal, when each individual's job is considered; their performance and targets are assessed and agreed in accordance with the responsibilities identified in their job description.

The Town Clerk and the three employees concerned consider their new job descriptions, attached as **Appendix 'C'**, **'D'** and **'E'**, remain fit for purpose and it is recommended that they are approved and adopted without amendment.

3) Review of Leave (Terms of Reference 4.8)

- **To note the report**

None of Council's employees had leave outstanding at the close of year end on 31 March, 2021.

4) To Review Working Arrangements

- **To consider the proposal for the working arrangements of the staff**

Earlier in the month, the Town Clerk was contacted by SF Recruitment who were undertaking research into the likely working practices of various organisations across the country as the nation eventually comes through the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is no question that going forward, the COVID-19 pandemic will have changed the working habits of the nation who have found

it unnecessary to be tied to a desk from 9:00am to 5:30pm five days per week.

SF Recruitment's findings are as follows:

Below I have outlined our findings, thank you to those who replied and contributed:

At Present:

Office Full Time	11.5%
Fully Remote	38.5%
Hybrid 2-3 days per week	50.0%

From 21 June 2021:

Office Full Time	15.4%
Yet to decide	11.5%
Hybrid 2-3 days per week	73.1%

So, it appears the vast majority of organisations are looking to keep in place some form of hybrid model, with the majority of responses highlighting staff had played a role in the decision. This is crucial to know as it appears organisations not offering hybrid working, will potentially be "left behind" if competitors are able to offer that.

85% of Manufacturing businesses have been in the office full time from the beginning and will continue to do so going forward. According to research by the BBC 65% of those in the Public Sector will continue to operate a hybrid model whilst 55% of private sector clients felt the same.

Throughout the UK those continuing with a hybrid model are broken down into the following days working in the office:

1 Day a Week	-	46%
2-3 Days	-	35%
4-5 Days	-	19%

According to an article from LinkedIn the UK's young, single and lowest paid are keen to return to the office full time, according to a new survey of 1,000 workers by employee engagement app Totem. Around half of 18 to 24-year olds, those earning less than £30,000 per year and single people

all favour working from the office over a hybrid working situation. In contrast, over-55s, high earners and couples would rather split their time between home and the office.

Only 9% of workers across all age groups want to work from home full time.

For many, the pandemic thrust working from home onto organisations out of necessity rather than choice. However, it has undoubtedly allowed employers to realise the benefits of unlocking a truly flexible workplace. Leaders have been able to understand both the qualities and shortcomings of remote working, and can choose to apply it as a helpful tool rather than a restriction. Employees' attitudes to the work-home balance have drastically changed. All businesses – whether they require employees on site or not – could have to accommodate flexible working following this paradigm shift to allow for staff retention and candidate attraction going forwards.

Town Council Employee Preferred Work/Home Balance

As the members of staff can be identified personally, the preference of employees is documented in the confidential papers.

What is important to note is that first and foremost the Town Hall needs to be manned from 9:00am to 4:00pm which is when the Town Hall 'officially' closes to the public, although not to hirers. It is also important to take into account those who cannot work from home, such as the Town Hall Events Supervisor/Housekeeper.

Providing the Town Hall is adequately manned on an equitable rota basis, with preferably two employees in the building, then those who prefer to work remotely should be permitted to do so until such time it is completely safe or necessary to work from the office.

6) Grading, Remuneration and Terms and Conditions of Employment

- **To note the report**

The National Employers, who negotiate pay on behalf of local authorities made a 1.50% pay increase offer to the three main trade unions – Unison, Unite and GMB on 14 May with the unions expected to meet the following week to decide whether to accept or not.

The National Joint Council submitted a pay claim in February calling for a 10% rise. However, the National Employers decided to wait until after the local elections has been completed before they responded.

Whilst the offer falls short of the unions' demands, being described as 'disappointing' and 'paltry', it is far more generous than the expected 'public sector pay freeze' announced by the Chancellor in November 2020.

As a result of the Chancellor's 2020 pledge, the Town Council did not factor a pay increase into the budget. If an agreement based on 1.50% is reached, the pay award will be backdated to April 2021 and will incur additional Council expenditure of approximately £5,396.