



Ref: Agenda/Personnel – 07/11/2023

2nd November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

All Members of the Personnel Committee are hereby summoned to the Personnel Committee Meeting of Biggleswade Town Council that will take place on **Tuesday 7th November 2023** at the **Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade** commencing at **7:00pm**, for the purpose of considering and recommending the business to be transacted as specified below.

Yours faithfully

Peter Tarrant
Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Distribution: All Town Councillors
Notice Boards
The Press

Committee Members:

Cllr M Russell (Chairman)
Cllr P Guilcher (Deputy Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr M Foster (ex-officio voting Member)
Cllr J Jones
Cllr M Knight (ex-officio voting Member)
Cllr S Patel
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas
Cllr J Woodhead

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.
- b. Non-Pecuniary interests in any agenda item.

3. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

4. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, pertaining to matters listed on the Agenda.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AEe_s3iPRm2jzk1BHObOJQ#/registration

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman, prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes, unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

5. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

6. **MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS**

- a. For Members to receive the minutes of the Personnel Meeting held on **Tuesday 1st August 2023** at the Offices of Biggleswade Town Council, The Old Court House, Saffron Road, Biggleswade.

7. **MATTERS ARISING**

- a. Minutes of the Personnel Meeting held on **Tuesday 1st August 2023**.

8. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- a. **Managing Personal Relationships at Work Policy**

For Members to receive and consider the Managing Personal Relationships at Work Policy.

9. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

10. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

To adjourn for a period of up to 15 minutes to allow members of the public to put questions or to address the Council, through the Chairman, in respect of any other business of the Town Council.

Please register in advance for this webinar:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AEe_s3iPRm2jzk1BHObOJQ#/registration

Each Speaker will give their name to the Chairman prior to speaking, which will be recorded in the minutes unless that person requests otherwise. Each Speaker will be allowed **(one) three-minute slot**.

11. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

a. (HR Updates)

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

12. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

HR Updates

For Members to receive HR Updates from the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.



MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 1st AUGUST 2023
AT 7.00PM AT BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES,
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE SG18 8DL

PRESENT:

Cllr M Russell (Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr M Foster
Cllr J Jones
Cllr M Knight
Cllr S Patel
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr C Thomas (via Zoom)
Cllr J Woodhead

Mr P Tarrant - Town Clerk & Chief Executive
Miss H Calvert - Administration & HR Manager

Members of the Public - 0

Meeting Formalities:

Following a reminder to meeting attendees, both panel and public, that this is a formal meeting, the Chairman advised that members of the public will be given an opportunity to speak during public open session but not at other times. The meeting is being filmed and by being present attendees are deemed to have agreed be filmed and to the use of those images and sound recordings. The Chairman advised that attendees should not disclose any personal information of individuals as this would infringe the Data Protection Rights of the individual. The Chairman asked everyone to mute their microphones when not speaking.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr P Guilcher.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- a. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item - None.
- b. Disclosable Pecuniary interests in any agenda item - None.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's announcements.

4. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

5. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

a. The Minutes of the Personnel Committee Meeting held on **Tuesday 30th May 2023** were **APPROVED** subject to the following amendment:

- The closing time of the meeting is changed from 7.07pm to 8.30pm.

6. MATTERS ARISING

None.

7. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

None.

8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

None.

9. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present.

10. EXEMPT ITEMS

The following resolution will be moved that it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt items are discussed.

(10a. HR Updates)

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council resolve to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

11. EXEMPT ITEMS

a. **HR Updates**

Members received an update on a variety of HR related matters.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40pm

Managing personal relationships at work Policy

Introduction

We recognise that, from time to time, close personal relationships may develop between members of staff, Members, and professional contacts of the Council.

Whilst the Council realises that employees have a right to a private life and therefore does not discourage relationships between employees, and between employees and Members, such relationships can be troublesome where employees and Members are unable to draw an important distinction between private and professional life.

This policy outlines the Council's position on personal relationships between employees and between employees and Members in order to ensure the Council's interests are maintained at all times, whilst at the same time balancing the interests of employees and Members. The policy places certain expectations on employees, their managers, and Members, to ensure that no blurring of judgement or conflict of interest arises.

It also seeks to protect the Council, its Members, and any employees, in order to avoid any allegations of improper professional behaviour.

Definitions

In the context of this policy, a personal relationship is defined as:

- a family connection or
- a romantic/sexual relationship.

This policy applies to all employees and Members of the Council. In relation to romantic/sexual partnerships, it applies to both opposite and same sex relationships.

Employee and Member responsibilities

In order to ensure potential conflicts of interest are avoided, employees are required to inform their line manager of any relationship which may affect their work or compromise the Council in any way. Members are required to inform the Town Clerk & Chief Executive and the Administration & HR Manager of any relationship with an employee which may affect their role as a Town Councillor. Any such information will be treated in the strictest confidence. The Council fully acknowledges the right of employees and Members to privacy in their personal affairs.

The following points should be observed:

- where the relationship exists between a member of staff and their line manager, it is the responsibility of both to inform a more senior manager.
- if an employee who is applying for a role in an area of the business in which an individual works with whom they have a personal relationship, this must be declared during the recruitment process to ensure a fair and impartial recruitment exercise.

- professionalism must always be maintained both at the workplace and any work-related events which are attended by employees or Members who have a personal relationship.
- consistency of treatment is paramount and no preferential or unfavourable treatment of those in the relationship or any other person is permitted as a result of the relationship.

Managers' responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the manager of a team within which employees are in a personal relationship, or which an employee is in a personal relationship with a Member, to take action to ensure the relationship is not the cause of a conflict of interest. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times if the employees or Member do not wish their relationship to be disclosed. Specifically, the manager should:

- consider alternative roles when an employee applies for a role in the same team as their partner and valid concerns are raised regarding the feasibility of this arrangement. This may include consideration of an equivalent role in a different team.
- take action where complaints are received from other team members if tensions are caused by the relationship, howsoever they may arise. This may include reorganising working patterns, moving one or both employees to another department or area of the Council. Care should be taken in these circumstances not to make a decision on who is to be moved based on any discriminatory grounds. The manager should seek advice from the Administration and HR Manager before confirming any moves.
- report suspicions of fraudulent activity to the Finance Director.
- take advice from the Administration and HR Manager in the event that a personal relationship breaks down in an attempt to avoid allegations of sexual harassment.
- maintain an appropriate confidential record of personal relationships using Appendix 1 below.

Restricted activities

A more senior manager will be responsible for the conduct of operational matters when a personal relationship exists between a line manager and a person for whom the line manager has responsibility. These operational matters are, for example:

- dealing with any disciplinary or performance concerns, whether routine or caused by specific incidents.
- signing off any hours worked above normal working hours.
- authorising leave of any kind.
- confirming any payment arrangements to be made.
- involvement in reorganisation of the area of the business in which the employee works.

Annual leave requests

Annual leave requests from all employees will be dealt with consistently. The authorisation of any requests from partners in personal relationships to take time off at the same time will be made in consideration with the needs of the business at the time, in the same way as requests from other employees.

Policy breaches

The Council will attempt to deal with any difficulties caused by personal relationships in the workplace in a sensitive manner and an informal method will always be used in the first instance. However, where this does not bring about a satisfactory resolution, recourse to formal procedures, such as the disciplinary or procedure, may be required.

The Council may deem the following to be disciplinary offences:

- the failure of an employee to declare their relationship in accordance with this policy.
- actions of a line manager who is in a personal relationship with an employee which are prohibited by this policy.
- Inappropriate and / or excessive use of the Council's IT or telephony systems, including email and instant messaging, such as (but not limited to) Microsoft Teams, for personal communication between those involved in personal relationships at work.
- The sharing of inappropriate content using the Councils systems.
- Inappropriate physical interactions whilst working or on works premises or client's sites.
- Harassment of any kind, related or unrelated to a personal relationship and including but not limited to sexual harassment.

Employees who are subject to disciplinary action may lodge an appeal to any sanction applied that they are dissatisfied with.

Employees who feel they have been treated unfairly in some way in connection with a personal relationship may raise a grievance in line with the Council's grievance procedure if initial attempts at an informal resolution have not produced a satisfactory outcome for them. The Council maintains a Member appeal panel.

Appendix 1

Strictly Private and Confidential

Declaration of Personal Relationship at Work

To be completed by the line manager

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Name of Employee: | Department: Job title: |
| Name of other employee in the personal relationship: | Department/Company: Job title: |
| Nature of the relationship: | |
| Potential or foreseeable conflicts of interest and action taken: | |
| Potential or foreseeable conflict of interest: | Action taken: |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Signed:
(employee)

Date

Signed:
(manager)

Date

Appendix 1

Strictly Private and Confidential

Declaration of Personal Relationship at the Council

To be completed by Town Councillor

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Name of Member: | |
| Name of employee in the personal relationship: | Department/Company: Job title: |
| Nature of the relationship: | |
| Potential or foreseeable conflicts of interest and action taken: | |
| Potential or foreseeable conflict of interest: | Action taken: |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Signed:
(employee)

Date

Signed:
(manager)

Date