

UNADOPTED

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE MALVERN TOWN COUNCIL

held in the Park View Meeting Room, Community Hub, Victoria Park

Wednesday 22 October 2025 at 6.00pm

Councillors

Present

J Leibrandt (Chair)
E Green (Vice Chair)
A Cherry
C Hooper
D Mead

Absent

C Fletcher (apologies)
K Newbigging (apologies)

Also in attendance

L Blake - Town Clerk
C Porter – Operations Manager
Cllr Marilyn Birks, Mayor
Cllr Lou Lowton

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were **NOTED** from Councillors Clive Fletcher and Karen Newbigging.

There was a lengthy discussion on whether substitutes were permissible on the Staffing Committee given that the Terms of Reference state that all members of the Staffing Committee must undergo HR training within three months of appointment.

There were differing viewpoints and general disagreement on this point and the Town Clerk confirmed that she had received advice from Worcestershire CALC saying that substitutions on this committee were not permitted unless they had received HR training.

It was suggested that this was a matter that needed to be discussed by Full Council in order to get full clarity for the future.

Cllr Hooper proposed that substitutes should be allowed on the basis that it is not necessary for them to have prior training. It was **RECOMMENDED** that Full Council consider allowing substitutions on the Staffing Committee with no prior need for training.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **AGREED** to defer consideration of the minutes of the previous meeting because they were not available on the website at the time of the meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

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It was **AGREED** to alter the order of the agenda to bring forward agenda item 10, date and time of the next meeting.

4. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Committee **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Staffing Committee would be held on Thursday 27 November at 2pm.

It was **NOTED** that the Park View Meeting Room was not available, so another venue would need to be sought.

5. **FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS WITH STAFF AND ANY ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN**

It was **NOTED** that not all meetings with staff had taken place and half of the administration team had not yet met with representatives from the staffing committee.

Cllr Lou Lowton left the meeting

Members of the Committee understood that there had been concerns raised from members of staff regarding the committee's plans to see staff contracts.

The chair and vice-chair felt that it was important to invite union representatives in to have full and open conversations and to reassure them that nothing sinister is going on.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cllr Green would work with the Town Clerk to get a list of Unions and to meet with Union Representatives.

Feedback from the meetings with staff was given as follows:

- The meetings were to reassure staff, to explain the committees' qualifications and to talk through the terms of reference.
- This should be an iterative process and talks should continue.
- A member of staff had approached Cllr Mead to raise concerns about the questions being asked during the meetings.
- There had been concerns raised by staff around the qualifications of the staffing committee to deal with the complexities of the Human Resources issues needed to be understood by the Staffing Committee. They felt that two hours of HR training was not enough.
- Staff didn't feel comfortable that councillors are saying they are their employers as they are responsible to their line managers.
- Concerns that the staffing committee are not working together.
- Staff fearful of their jobs and fearful of people looking at personal documents and would like to know what the staffing committee are trying to achieve.

The Town Clerk and Operations Manager suggested that if the Committee could have a more positive focus, such as looking at benchmarking, training and rewards, then this may help the staff to be less fearful of what the purpose of this committee is.

Staffing Committee members agreed with this.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Staffing Committee should prepare a short statement to be sent to the staff, explaining that the staffing committee is for and what positive benefits it could have. It should explain that the main focus of the Staffing Committee is staff development and recognition.

Cllr Lowton returned to the meeting.

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It was **AGREED** to alter the order of the agenda again so that the reviews of training and development for both staff and the staffing committee could be considered next.

6. **REVIEW OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT - STAFF**

The Town Clerk informed the committee that due to other work commitments, she and the Operations Manager had not yet had time to put together the document detailing the training and development that had taken place over the last twelve months.

It was **AGREED** to defer this matter to the next meeting.

7. **REVIEW OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT – STAFFING COMMITTEE**

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk should contact Worcestershire CALC to ask what other HR training they would recommend for the Staffing Committee and that this would be revisited at the next or subsequent meeting. The Town Clerk and Deputy were asked what HR and staff management training they had undertaken in the recent past.

Committee now returned to Agenda Item 5.

8. **REVIEW OF STAFFING BUDGET 2026/27**

The Town Clerk explained that the staffing budget had previously been considered by Policy and Resources Committee, but that it was now an item on the Staffing Committee's Terms of Reference. A draft budget paper was handed around and is attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

The staffing budget for the following year is normally based on the re-forecast along with a percentage increase for the annual cost of living increase agreed nationally and any spinal increases which may occur during the year due to successful performance reviews.

It was noted that a benchmarking process had already been agreed and that this may result in changes to salaries, but that this was, as yet unknown and had not been included in the figures presented.

Several members felt that when employing staff and setting a salary, personal financial hardships should be considered. The Town Clerk explained that the Council had to engage staff for the job role and salary available, but that there was a hardship fund run by the Council that all staff could apply for if needed.

It was **RESOLVED** to extend the meeting by 15 minutes to finish at 8:15pm.

Committee members agreed that there should be a contingency fund set aside for any changes to staff salaries, training and development as well as the introduction of staff rewards. A number of suggestions were put forward as to how this contingency should be calculated.

After discussion, it was **RECOMMENDED** that the staffing budget for 2026/27 should be set at £680,000. This included the proposed budget of £617,413 as put forward by officers as well as a contingency fund of £62,587 to be used as necessary for changes in salaries, training and development and rewards.

9. **REVIEW OF STAFF REWARDS**

The Chair asked officers what form of reward system was currently in place, and it was confirmed that there wasn't a specific reward system.

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It was suggested that when the Town Clerk prepared her report on benchmarking findings, she might also include information on what the benchmarking councils offered as a reward system. Councillors discussed a number of possible rewards including, wellbeing days, a day of leave on birthdays and contributions to gym memberships, vouchers for meals out. It was felt that staff members may have different views on what they would like to see as a “reward”. It was therefore **AGREED** that a questionnaire would be given to staff to gauge views on a possible reward system and that this would be reported back to and discussed at the next meeting.

10. **FORMAT OF STAFFING OVERVIEW REPORT**

It was **AGREED** to defer this item to the next meeting.

The meeting finished at 8:15pm.

.....(Chair)