

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) COMMITTEE OF
ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 6 MARCH
2020 at 9:15 in the Council Offices, Mitre Street, Abertillery**

PRESENT: Councillors:

Gill Clark (Chair), Tracey Dyson, Julie Holt, Rob Phillips and Allen Rees

Officers: Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk

Others: None

216. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

No apologies

217. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members declared any personal interests.

218. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following items of business, by virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that disclosure of the matters to be discussed would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of those matters.

219. CLERKS ABSENCE

The Deputy Clerk explained that the Clerk, Richard Gwinnell, is absent from the office due to sickness for at least one month, starting Wednesday 26th February 2020, and that he could have up to 5 Months leave on full pay and an additional 5 months leave on half pay after that first period. In answer to a question from a Member the Deputy Clerk stated that the HR Committee had full delegated powers to make any decisions in the management of staff, which could include paying overtime, increasing hours or employing additional staff.

The employment of additional staff to cover the workload was discussed but it was agreed that the time taking to induct and develop anyone new would cost more time than the current Deputy Clerk just doing the work. The Deputy Clerk explained the current workload and he was asked if working additional hours would be acceptable to him, he agreed that it was in the short term.

The Committee RESOLVED to:

(a). Allow the Deputy to work up to a maximum of 14 hours per week as overtime, the Chair of the HR Committee would authorise such payments on production of timesheets

from the Deputy Clerk.

(b). to maintain the Office opening hours at 9:00am to 1pm and if the Deputy Clerk was working outside those hours there was no expectation that he would be contactable even if he was in the office.

(c). to adjust office opening hours on evening meeting days, the office would not be open in the mornings and would instead be opening from 3pm to 6pm.

(d). that on the return to work of the Clerk, the Chair along with one other member of the HR Committee would conduct a return to work interview with him to discuss his transition back to full time working hours.

220. Discuss the process to deal with two grievances against members by an officer of council.

Prior to the meeting the Deputy Clerk had presented to each member a Binder which contained the grievance complaints and the evidence that the officer, had compiled, He had each member sign a form saying they would keep the contents of the binders confidential and return them to the Deputy Clerk when the process was complete.

There was a great deal of concern that due to the nature of the grievance complaints and the people involved that any investigations and decisions that the HR Committee could make could be seen as not being impartial. The Deputy Clerk will report back via email of any progress and the HR Committee will only meet to make decisions or to discuss progress

The Committee RESOLVED to:

(a) Have this matter investigated by an external independent person.

(b) Instruct the Deputy Clerk to find an independent person to complete this investigation and bring back recommendations with estimated costs to the HR Committee

(c) Instruct the Deputy Clerk to write letters to all parties involved informing them that a grievance investigation is taking place and the and that the matter is being taken out to an independent person and the investigation is not being done by the HR Committee.

221. To deal with a formal complaint by a Member against an officer of Council

The complaint was in two parts.

“Chair at the next meeting of the HR Committee I would like you all to discuss the matter of the Clerk not sending out to me all the relevant paper work for the meeting as laid down in the Local Gov Act, advice has been to me by OVW and SLCC”

“Also the Council Offices as the name implies are our offices we should not have to make an appointment to go into them the Clerk and Deputy Clerk work for the Councillors”

For point one, the Deputy Clerk explained that under the Local Government Act 1972 “a summons to attend the meeting, specifying the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting and signed by the proper officer of the council, shall be left or sent by post to the usual place of residence of every member of council”. So, by the letter of the law it is only the summons and the agenda that must be posted, but this isn’t really within the spirit of conducting effective council business.

For point two, the Deputy Clerk referred to the minutes of the Council Meeting of 18 April 2018, Item 282(3) where the Council had resolved that “officers be given plenary powers to take whatever steps are needed to improve security and protect staff, in the absence of any action by BGCBC”

The Committee RESOLVED to:

- (a) instruct the Proper Officers in future to send full papers, as well as the summons and agendas of meetings to the Member involved and to offer that service to any other Member.
- (b) retain the current arrangements where members had to make appointments to see officers.

The meeting ended at 10:20

Signed as a correct record by the Chair

NB these minutes are a summary of the proceedings and record of the decisions taken. They are not intended to be a verbatim record.

Minutes produced by Steve Edwards, Deputy Clerk