

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF ABERTILLERY AND LLANHILLETH COMMUNITY COUNCIL (ALCC) HELD ON 12 JUNE 2020 at 10.00am using Microsoft Teams video conferencing and (in the case of Allen Rees) a telephone on loudspeaker

PRESENT: Councillors:

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

Officers: Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk

Others: None

ABSENT: None

228. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOMES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. As one member had difficulty getting into the Microsoft Teams system, the discussion of the agenda commenced at 10.15am.

229. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No personal interests were declared.

230. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, by virtue of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from discussions on the following items on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Everyone attending confirmed that they were alone in the room from where they were attending the meeting.

231. COMPASSIONATE LEAVE POLICY

Members considered the ACAS advice and local council policy comparison, which the Clerk outlined.

Discussion ensued on the need to be sensitive and compassionate in the case of a family bereavement, taking individual circumstances into account and recognising that every individual dealt with bereavement differently and may need more or less time off work. The judgement of the circumstances was best made by the employee's line manager. If the employee went to the doctor, due to the stress of a bereavement, they were likely to be signed off sick for a month, but some people may feel able to return to work earlier or work from home or in other flexible ways. The Chair moved that the policy adopted by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council be adopted for ALCC, as it was the most appropriate.

RESOLVED (unanimously) (1) that the following compassionate leave policy be adopted

and compassionate leave be granted for ALCC:

For Bereavement of a near relative – Up to 5 days with pay (including funeral), which do not need to be taken consecutively, however it should be taken in a reasonable timescale at or around the time for the bereavement. Also, recognises that employees may require a reasonable amount of time off when a close family member passes away in recognition of the emotional impact with further reasonable amount of time off when a close family member passes away. Further time off without pay or flexible working arrangements may therefore be granted at the discretion of the line manager.

Near relative is defined as: Husband, Wife, Partner, Mother, Father, Son, Daughter, Brother, Sister including “in-law”, step and half blood relatives, by adoption, or a person who is otherwise solely dependent upon the applicant at that point in time.

A query was raised about what would happen if the Clerk was in the position of needing compassionate leave. A councillor read the following quote from the Good Councillors Guide: *“In law, the Chair has few special powers. For instance it is unlawful for a council to delegate decision making to any individual councillor and the Chair is no different”*. He expressed the view that the Clerk’s line manager was the HR Committee.

Members and the Clerk explained that it was standard practice for the Clerk to go to the Chair (or Leader in some councils) for day to day “line management” checks or discretions (in situations such as compassionate leave or longer periods of annual leave) as there was no other more senior staff member for the Clerk to go to for “approval” and it took time (which would not be available in such sensitive and time critical cases) to organise meetings of the HR Committee (with three clear working days’ notice). A member moved and the committee:

RESOLVED (unanimously) (2) that the Chair (or in his/her absence the Vice Chair) exercise the “line manager” discretion in relation to the Clerk.

232. OTHER MATTERS AFFECTING STAFF

No other matters were raised for discussion at this meeting.

The meeting ended at 10.40am.

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 Richard Gwinnell, Town Clerk