

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE HELD ON
THURSDAY 11TH JULY 2024 AT 6:00PM IN WELLS TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: Cllrs: L Agabani, S Eden, G Folkard, T Robbins (Chair), H Siggs, P Welch

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: S Luck
Staff Representative: A Allen

24/17/S **i. APPOINT CHAIR**
Cllr Tony Robbins appointed

ii. APPOINT VICE-CHAIR
Cllr Shirley Eden appointed

24/18/S **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM COMMITTEE**
None

24/19/S **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive Councillors' Declarations of Interests, made under the Council's Code of Conduct adopted 12th May 2022.
None declared.

24/20/S **MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**
None Present.

24/21/S **MINUTES OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
11TH APRIL 2024.**
The minutes were proposed, seconded and signed as a true record.

24/22/S **STAFFING UPDATE**
i. To receive an update from the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk expressed thanks to staff for rallying to provide support.

Devolution is a significant project and will see staffing impacts, and resources have been procured to support the project and the Town Clerk. Specifically looking at TUPE implications and consultation needs across the summer months.

The Town Clerk asked to formally put on record his concerns associated with Councillors references to members of the public. Please ensure that due process through the relevant committee is undertaken before referencing to the public that funds can be moved from other areas of the budget to accommodate, or project commitments made.

The Town Clerk also sought to advise Staffing Committee regarding his concerns and his intended next steps, regarding the engagement of Members with staff, specifically acting outside of the member declaration and governance processes.

The Town Clerk referenced his concerns that some members were actioning outside of their areas of responsibility. Specifically, some members have not declared interests in items, then they should have, and equally have attempted to instruct staff directly, either because the Town Clerk has

advised it is not an action of the Council, or challenged in some way, or to undermine the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk reference that this is neither acceptable behaviour, nor sustainable behaviour given the challenges that this Council faces in the coming 12-18 months, and was not fair to staff, who were being made to feel uncomfortable.

The Clerk sought guidance from the Chair as to how to proceed. He is reluctant to engage with the Monitoring Officer, simply as this action felt hardhanded, however, formally, this is the only other process open to him.

The Chair (Cllr Robbins) acknowledged the concerns of the Town Clerk and felt strongly that if the Clerk had completed all other actions, and the Monitoring Officer response was the only remaining action for him, that he should feel free to explore it and supported by the committee to do so.

Cllr Robbins also referenced that the democratic processes of this Council are very clear and had been made aware on several occasions, however, it was requested that all members be advised once again of their roles through distribution of the declarations process and all relevant governance processes.

Cllr Agabani referenced that in many instances Councillors are elected because of their passion in a field or subject and this is of significant value to the Council. All councillors work hard for the good of Wells, however, possibly, a lack of understanding of process needs to be addressed.

Cllr Eden reiterated that all should be aware that there is process for a reason and that training should be offered to those who need it.

Cllr Siggs confirmed the references of others and added that all officers of the Council should be respected. This does not require a constant agreement with decisions, there are mechanism in place if Members wish to disregard this advice, but to lobby and bring in additional people to committees, clap and be disrespectful in a public meeting is undermining the staff and the system and is not acceptable.

The Town Clerk thanked the Committee for their support, and confirmed that acting upon the grievance process was not something he took lightly or wished to do, but if members continued to operation in this way, he would be forced to act upon. The Chair agreed to regularly review the matter with the Clerk.

Cllr Robbins asked for clarification on the standing of Wells in Bloom, where it sat within the delegations and constitution of Wells City Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that several years ago it moved from being managed by volunteers, to now being managed within Wells City Council staff.

- ii. Staff Vacancies
5 Vacancies consisting of 1 x Caretaker, 2 x Open Spaces and 2 x Toilet Cleaners. Recruitment currently active for all posts but challenging to source candidates.
- iii. Future staff structure
The Clerk referenced that work is currently underway to determine the impacts to the structure, and that it is expected a draft can be provided to Committee at the next meeting. Should any adjustment be required ahead of this date (10th October 24), then a special meeting will be called.

24/23/S STAFF REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Request for CCTV consideration at Town Hall following increase in incidents out of hours and associated with some functions/partners.
Proposed to Finance Committee to source costed proposals.

Reference made by several staff concerning the allocation of jobs and functions by members directly. Request to consider the impact to staff, and the process of request, so as not to place undue pressure on individuals.
Committee agreed to reference due process to all members at the next Full Council meeting.

Concerns raised regarding level of vacancies and the impacts this was having on individuals and functions. Not sustainable and action sought.
Committee thanked staff for their efforts and recognised the need for stability. The Town Clerk tasked to resolve as soon as possible.

24/24/S ANY MATTERS OF URGENT REPORT

None

24/25/S DATE OF NEXT STAFFING MEETING: 6pm Thursday 10th October 2024

EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Note: It is necessary for matters to be considered in confidence, it was proposed by the Chair that a resolution be passed under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as amended to allow a private report.

Minutes signed by The Chair: **Date:**