

MINUTES of the MEETING of the PERSONNEL COMMITTEE held at THE COUNCIL OFFICES, THE GROVE, SWANSCOMBE, DA10 0GA on WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL 2026 at 7.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor Dawn Johnston - Chairman
Councillor Elizabeth Wickham – Vice-Chairman
Councillor Lorna Cross
Councillor Ann Duke
Councillor Pete Harris
Councillor Lesley Howes

ABSENT: There were none

ALSO PRESENT: Graham Blew – Town Clerk
Jack Turner – Locum Responsible Financial Officer (via Teams)

580/25-26. **ARRANGEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS REGARDING FILMING OR RECORDING THE MEETING.**

The Chairman explained the arrangements and constraints relating to the filming or recording of the meeting.

581/25-26. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Richard Lees, due to other commitments.

Recommended: That the reason for absence, for the above Town Councillors, be formally accepted and approved.

582/25-26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

There were none.

As per Standing Order 34 c) the Chairman adjourned the meeting at this point to allow members of the public to address the meeting in relation to the business being transacted at the meeting.

583/25-26. **URGENT ITEMS / MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES.**

There were none.

584/25-26. **TO CONFIRM AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2026.**

Recommended: That the minutes from the meeting held on 18 March 2026 be confirmed and signed.

585/25-26. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

MOVED BY Councillor Elizabeth Wickham and seconded by Councillor Ann Duke.

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following item(s).

No members of the press or public were present during discussion of the following item of business.

586/25-26. PAYROLL OUTSOURCING – DETAILED FINANCIAL & GOVERNANCE REPORT.

As part of the Council's wider financial governance review Members considered the report provided by the Locum RFO. The Locum RFO detailed the benefits of outsourcing payroll which included financial governance, risk management and operational efficiency. Members were also advised that any decision should prioritise risk reduction over marginal cost savings. Members considered the x3 quotes that had been provided with the report.

After a lengthy discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and, after being put to a vote, agreed:

Recommended:

- 1 That outsourcing the payroll provision be agreed.
- 2 That Option 1 in the recommendation of the report be selected to undertake the Town Councils payroll provision.

587/25-26. **ALIGNMENT OF STAFF PAY TO NJC STRUCTURE (2025/2026 BASELINE.)**

The Locum RFO had submitted a report for Members consideration.

It was proposed, duly seconded and, unanimously agreed;

Recommended: That the report / item be deferred for consideration once the new Town Clerk / RFO position had been filled.

588/25-26. **TOWN CLERK / RFO BENCHMARKING.**

The Locum RFO introduced and detailed the report.

During discussion the Chairman confirmed that the hours and closing dates on the advert would need to be amended and that the post would be advertised via NALC, KALC and the SLCC.

It was proposed, duly seconded and unanimously agreed:

Recommended:

1. That the role be benchmarked within LC3 SCP 33-39, extendable to SCP 42 as detailed in the report.
2. That the advert, with the suggested amendments, be agreed and posted via NALC, KALC and the SLCC.

589/25-26. **STAFFING ITEMS / UPDATE.**

The Town Clerk updated Members on the correspondence and information provided by the HR Consultant and from Dartford Borough Council regarding the Old Fire Station Community Café.

There followed a lengthy discussion, which included clarification that, whilst a decision had been made regarding the Old Fire Station Community Café a decision regarding the x2 employees that were working there had not been made and was open for meaningful consultation before a final decision could be considered.

It was then proposed, duly seconded and after being put to a vote, agreed:

Recommended:

1. That the timeline provided by the HR Consultant be agreed.
2. That the proposed At-Risk letters be sent out on 23 April 2026
3. That the first consultation meeting be held on 28 April 2026
4. That the HR Consultant be present at the consultation Meetings.
5. That the Town Mayor issues a notice of closure after the first consultation meeting.

The Town Clerk advised members of the following staffing matters:

- The x2 replacement Facilities Operatives had started on 1 April 2026.
- In accordance with Standing Order 30 c) Members were informed that one of the replacement Facilities Operatives was the daughter of a Town Councillor.
- The new Administration Assistant was scheduled to start on 11 May 2026.

Recommended: That the update on staffing matters, as detailed above, be noted.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(CHAIRMAN)

331/25-26. **BUDGET REPORT - ESTIMATES 2026 – 2027 (p).**

The ATC/RFO went through the report in detail.

After lengthy discussion it was proposed, duly seconded and agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

1. That the current financial position of the Town Council in line with the draft Annual Estimates be noted.
2. That the proposed budget adjustments put forward for the Annual Estimates be taken forward as detailed:
 - a. Public Lighting – That no additional budget would be allocated for Christmas Lighting in 2026 and to continue using the solar lights for a second year.
 - b. Churchyard – That the agreed budget of £2,000 for additional works to the Churchyard Wall at St Peter & St Pauls Church be included for 2026 - 2027.
 - c. Civic Budget – That the Town Council stop budgeting for a Civic Reception in the 2026 - 2027 financial year, with the Civic Budget increased to £2,000 and more emphasis be placed on utilising the Annual Open Town meeting to thank local organisations.
 - d. Council Office Building Maintenance – That the budget allocation of £4,000 be included for the repairs to the Air Conditioning System in the Council Offices Community Hall in 2026 - 2027.
 - e. Wage Budget within the Old Fire Station Community Café – That the wage budget for an additional member of staff, at the cost of £5,000, be included for the 2026 - 2027 Financial Year, with finalised contract arrangements being put to the Personnel Committee.
 - f. Cost of Living Increases – That the level of budgetary increase of 5% to allow for the cost of living be agreed.
 - g. Staffing Budgets – That the increase to the staffing budgets of a minimum of 3%, agreed by the Personnel Committee (minute 284/25-26) be endorsed.

EXTRACT OF MINUTES

284/25-26. **STAFFING BUDGET 2026 – 2027.**

In line with minute 273/24-25 and as part of the wider Estimates Process for 2026 – 2027, members considered the staffing budget recommendations propose.

After Members had discussed the level of potential pay rises against the current levels of inflation etc. it was proposed, duly seconded and unanimously agreed:

Recommended:

1. That the inclusion of an initial minimum pay rise of 3.0% in the Estimates for 2026 – 2027 be agreed.
2. That the Personnel Committee at its meeting in May 2026 would set the final staffing salary award for 2026 – 2027.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 11.15 am.

Signed: _____
(CHAIRMAN)

Date: _____