

## BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

To: **ALL MEMBERS OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **STAFFING COMMITTEE** to be held in the Ante-Room, Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, on **MONDAY, 16 JANUARY 2017 at 6.00 pm.**

The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.



Interim Town Clerk

11 January 2016

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### A G E N D A

**1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

To elect a Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the 2016-17 municipal year.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for absence.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

To sign as a correct record the minutes of the Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council Staffing Committee meeting held on 12 December 2016.

**4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest, (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest), they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 9 July 2012, and are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room.

**5. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

(i) To receive from members who have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any items on the agenda an application for dispensation under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011 to enable members to participate in discussions and voting.

(ii) To consider requests for dispensation.

## **6. RECRUITMENT OF TOWN CLERK**

At its meeting on 9th January council RESOLVED to invite NEREO to aid the Interim Town Clerk, in consultation with the Staffing Committee to prepare a Job Description for the post of Town Clerk, and to receive a further report at its next meeting on the Job Description, person specification and likely salary required to attract suitable candidates.

The Interim Town Clerk will:

- i. Provide an update on contact with NEREO
- ii. Provide an update Job Description formats and content, and
- iii. Provide an update on likely job evaluation approaches and the range of possible outcomes and the committee will be invited to provide guidance to the Interim Town Clerk on next steps.

The relevant appendix from the council report is attached for members information.

## **7. STAFFING REVIEW**

At its meeting on 9th January council RESOLVED to delegate to the Staffing Committee the power to instruct the Interim Town Clerk to prepare a programme for a staffing review, and to approve that programme.

The Interim Town Clerk will provide an update on the proposed methodology and the committee will be invited to provide guidance to the Interim Town Clerk on next steps.

The relevant appendix from the council report is attached for members information.

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To agree a date for the next meeting.

### **MEMBERS OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE:**

**Councillors: H Bettison, D Blackburn, I Dixon, A Forbes, A Gibson, K Graham, G Hill, P Hodgson, J Lang, G McLean, G Roughead, C Seymour and G Smith**

## Town Clerk's Skillset

1. The Town Clerk of Berwick upon Tweed is Chief Officer of an organization with a budget of approximately £350,000. Even if the role of Responsible Financial Officer is separated from the Proper Officer role in future, the Town Clerk will still be line manager for the RFO, and as such, must be capable of supervising the budget and financial processes. The Town Clerk must therefore be capable of evidencing significant budgetary skills and experience of budgetary accountability.
2. BTC is a local council operating in a very specific legal environment; potential Town Clerks must be able to evidence an awareness of that legal environment, the skills to research and analyse relevant legal issues, and the ability to make quasi-judicial decisions on the basis of evidence and reasoning. Experience alone is unlikely to be sufficient evidence of these skills. The person appointed should either hold CILCA, or be capable of achieving it within a realistic timeframe.
3. BTC operates in an unique environment defined by its geography, the relationship of the town to its heritage and environment, the complex partnerships created by statute and custom, and its needs as a community. Potential Town Clerks need to evidence an understanding of these relationships, and the skills to navigate the complex relationships involved.
4. The Town Clerk is accountable to council, and needs to evidence a clear and detailed understanding of the role of councillors, their duties and responsibilities, and the skills required to manage the relationship between council and its staff, and individual councillors and themselves.
5. The Town Clerk is line manager for staff, and for staff who supervise or instruct others. Potential Town Clerks therefore need to evidence an understanding of line management, of Human Relationship management and the legal and health and safety environment within which the Town Council must operate.
6. Policy is decided by the Town Council, but potential Town Clerks will need to evidence an understanding of modern policy making processes, including research and consultation. Since the council is committed to promoting the economic development of Berwick and its tourism industry, knowledge of best practice in these areas would be helpful.
7. As a local council, BTC is likely to change its priorities in accordance with the wishes of the electorate. Potential Town Clerks need to evidence significant skills in business process design or change management, as well as the routine business improvement skills required to deliver efficiencies and best value.
8. The Town Clerk is responsible for the Town Council's commitment to engage with its community and partners, and potential Town Clerks need to evidence an understanding of best practice in communications and engagement and the skills required.
9. A significant proportion of the Town Council's budget is currently spent on play areas and environmental works; a knowledge of those areas, and appropriate project management / project sponsorship skills are essential.

## Capacity /Skills Gaps

1. It is important to make clear where there are skills gaps, as in a lack of knowledge how to do things, capacity gaps, as in a lack of time to do things we know how to do, and also under utilization, where individuals may be performing tasks that could be delegated if there was more capacity or better systems to enable delegation.
2. Assuming that council adopts the proposed role definition laid out in the Town Clerks Skillset paper, above, the largest and clearest skill gap is in financial planning and management. Existing staff are capable of maintaining an accurate record of income and expenditure, and a town clerk with the skillset laid out above is likely to have some idea of key issues around financial planning and risk management, but the Town Council requires a financial manager who is able to bring a structured approach to risk management, reserves and treasury management and the planning of income and expenditure, by profiling both and managing cash flow.
3. It would be desirable to have a second member of staff who has managerial skills and the ability to make appropriate decisions in the absence of the clerk. If this person was the RFO, with the skills identified above, they would provide a degree of cover in the absence of the Town Clerk. It would be desirable for this person, also, to work towards obtaining CILCA.
4. The other significant skills gap is in the area of asset management and site maintenance. By far the largest area of the council's work is its large stock of street furniture and litter bins and its playparks. This is a gap that could, feasibly, be filled by development of existing staff. RoSPA and other providers deliver a range of courses aimed not just at those inspecting play areas but also those managing them, and where staff might acquire analogous skills to enable them to manage other public realm assets.
5. The council has no specialist allotment officer, and lacks formal skills in areas such as the management and maintenance of existing allotments. We regularly receive invitations to send officers on specialist courses in topics such as the handling of vermin treatments. Council may wish to consider whether this should be added to an existing role, or whether it might wish to seek to retain a subject matter expert from another authority to provide advice as and when necessary.
6. The provision of additional licences for the new accounting software means that the work of inputting financial records and producing reports can be shared between staff, creating capacity to allocate work time to asset management and maintenance and project management from existing roles.
7. Existing staff have considerable informal project management experience, but no agreed methodology to work to. Adoption of a formal methodology like PRINCE II would be disproportionate, but council needs to agree a formal scheme for managing projects and a suite of tools, such as easy to use GANTT charts and project definition documents that enable project sponsors and project managers to understand their roles. Level 3 Project Management courses are available from providers, and would form a suitable part of the training programme for staff expected to take on project management roles.
8. Existing staff deliver an excellent civic service, but council needs to take note that it needs to make provision for refresher and updating the skills of staff involved in this work; currently there appears to be no capacity planned to enable the relevant staff to engage with the National Association of Civic Officers, who would provide support and knowledge to staff, for instance.