

ROTHBURY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Staffing Committee meeting held on Wednesday 24th July 2024 commencing 6pm in the Dovecote Room, Jubilee Institute

Those Present: Cllr Devlin (Chairman), Cllr Old, Cllr Milne, Cllr Colquitt

In Attendance: C Miller (Clerk/RFO), D Nicholson (Support and Development Officer)

RPC/STAFFING/24/31 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

RPC/STAFFING/24/32 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED:

Cllr Devlin proposed and seconded as Chairman and duly elected.

RPC/STAFFING/24/33 Election of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED:

Cllr Milne proposed and seconded as Vice Chairman and duly elected.

RPC/STAFFING/24/34 Declaration of Members Interests

There were no Declaration of Members Interests.

RPC/STAFFING/24/35 Minutes of previous meeting held on Wednesday 3rd July 2024

RESOLVED:

Members agreed the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 3rd July 2024 were a true record further to the following addition to second paragraph of agenda item **RPC/STAFFING/24/29** "Cllr Milne stressed the importance of duty of care and the obligation to make reasonable adjustments."

RPC/STAFFING/24/36 Consideration of request to Parish Council for delegation in respect of accessing professional advice from external organisations.

Support & Development Officer advised delegation can be made by the Parish Council to the Clerk/Proper Officer, and to a committee of the council. Delegation cannot be made to an individual Councillor. In the event of the Parish Council asking another body to undertake actions on its behalf then this is best undertaken on a contractual basis. If delegation is made to a committee, authority to undertake identified actions must be agreed by the Parish Council. The Parish Council will be guided by the Proper Officer. The Parish Council should not approve open-ended or 'blank cheque' delegation, and a committee in exercising delegated authority will report to the council on a regular basis to ensure all members have proper awareness of actions taken on their behalf. Budgetary control can be ensured through the Parish Council or a Finance Committee. If specific authority is given to engage an outside agency, the advice to be sought needs to be clear to avoid unnecessary expenditure. Appropriate advice from a suitably qualified person should be available to members when exercising delegated

responsibility. Consideration needs to be given as to which body is most appropriate. There are several private sector companies specialising in legal and human resource advice. However, to ensure value-for-money consideration should be given to public sector expertise as part of any commissioning exercise. Organisations such as ACAS, NALC, SLCC, NAC, Northumberland County Council, and the council's insurer have a detailed understanding of parish and town councils and can provide advice and support to the sector. The Proper Officer will normally seek the advice on behalf of the Parish Council. However, in exceptional circumstances this might be deemed inappropriate. The exceptional circumstances must be expressed and contained in the minutes of the meeting. Advice will then be sought in writing and written response requested to ensure clarity. This advice will then be shared with all members at their next meeting. If the Proper Officer is unable to attend a meeting, the Parish Council/Committee will ensure appropriate and necessary advice is available from a suitably qualified person to ensure decisions satisfy statutory requirements. A decision should not be made without this advice. All actions should be recorded for audit purposes.

Cllr Milne and Colquitt of the opinion a group of words should be enough for the Staffing Committee to seek advice, the process should not be long-winded. Cllr Old disagreed, items need to be documented, adoption of a pro-forma document for recording the procedure does not need to be complicated.

Officers advised a policy for delegation of authority will reduce the risk of future overspend when delegation is employed.

Parish Cllr training in terms of roles and responsibilities of Clerk and Cllrs was very helpful. An understanding of The Support and Development Officer roles and responsibilities would be useful, this could be discussed during an informal meeting.

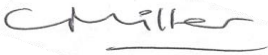
RESOLVED:

- 1.Clerk to prepare report relating to proposed Staffing Committee delegation process.
- 2.Securing an Occupational Health Service to be added to agenda for Parish Council meeting 14/8/24.
- 3.Staffing Committee, Clerk and S&DO to discuss performance management and training needs 12/8/24 630pm

RPC/STAFFING/24/37

Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Staffing Committee will be confirmed at a later date.



Claire Miller, Clerk/RFO

The meeting closed at 715pm