Minutes of the Personnel Committee
Held on Monday, 26 October 2026 in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, TN13 3QG at 7:00 PM

Attendance

Present: Councillors Ancrum (Chair), Dr Canet (substitute for Michaelides), Dr Dixon (substitute for O'Hara (Deputy Mayor)), Skinner OBE (substitute for Shea (Leader)), Wightman

Apologies: Councillors Michaelides (substituted by Dr Canet), O'Hara (Deputy Mayor) (substituted by Dr Dixon), Shea (Leader) (substituted by Skinner OBE)

Also present: Town Clerk / Chief Executive

Public Questions

No questions had been submitted by members of the public and no matters were raised under this item.

445 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence and nominated substitutes were received and noted as above.

446 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No written requests for dispensations had been submitted to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

447 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

448 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 18th March 2026 were presented for approval.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

449 NOTES OF STAFF MEETINGS

The notes of Staff Meetings held on 14th April 2026, 27th May 2026, and 5th October 2026 were received and noted.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

450 SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL STAFF - HR MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

The Committee received and considered the following HR information:

2025/2026 Final Reports, to March 2026

- Staffing details
- Pension details
- Absence Details
- Turnover Details

2026/2027 Reports to September 2026

- Staffing details
- Pension details
- Absence Details
- Turnover Details

It was **RESOLVED** that the HR Management Information set out in the reports to March 2026 and September 2026 be received and noted.

451 PAY OFFER, BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS AND MERIT AWARD

It was noted that the Local Government Association, acting on behalf of the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, had announced that agreement had been reached on the 2026 pay award for local government employees. The settlement provided for a 3.3% increase in pay rates and allowances.

It was further noted that a 3.3% increase had been built into the 2027/2028 draft Town Council budget and that no merit rises had been included.

It was **RESOLVED** that the 3.3% pay offer and merit award assumptions in relation to next year's budget be received and noted.

452 SAGE HR SYSTEM

It was noted that the Sage HR online package, an add-on to Sage Payroll, had been expanded beyond its previous use for payslips only. Additional modules covering electronic timesheet and annual leave submissions had been implemented with effect from September 2026. The new system provided a more streamlined process for staff to submit annual leave requests and timesheets, together with faster and more direct information regarding expected monthly pay and immediate updating of leave allowances.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

453 EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT 2025: OCTOBER 2026 CHANGES

It was noted that several employment law reforms introduced by the Employment Rights Act 2025 were due to take effect in October 2026, including:

- Longer Employment Tribunal time limits
- A stronger duty to prevent sexual harassment
- Liability for third-party harassment
- Ministers Power to specify preventative steps (employers must take to prevent sexual harassment)
- Duty to inform workers of the right to join a union
- Stronger trade union workplace access rights
- Trade Union and industrial relation measures including electronic and workplace trade union ballots, simplified industrial action rules, simplified statutory recognition process, new rights and facilities for union representatives, protection from detriment during industrial action

It was **RESOLVED:**

1. That the information and implications of these changes for the Town Council's role as an employer be received and noted.

2. That the Town Council review its risks, policies, contracts and procedures to ensure continued compliance.

454 KENT PENSION FUND: DRAFT INVESTMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT CONSULTATION

The Council considered whether to submit a response to the Kent Pension Fund's consultation on its draft Investment Strategy Statement (ISS). It was noted that the Kent Pension Fund is updating its ISS following the results of the triennial valuation and developments in government Local Government Pension Scheme pooling reforms. The ISS sets out how the Fund's assets are invested in support of its fiduciary duty to pay members' pension benefits, and covers investment objectives, beliefs, approach to responsible investment, and the level of investment risk the Fund is prepared to accept. The consultation was open throughout October 2026 and invited responses from scheme members and participating employers.

It was **RESOLVED** that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, Chair of Personnel Committee and Chair of the Finance & Delivery Committee, to compile a response to the consultation by the end of October 2026 deadline.

455 CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS 2026

Consideration was given to Christmas/New Year arrangements for the Town Council. It was noted that arrangements would be put in place for emergency cover and a list of out-of-hour numbers would be circulated to all Councillors.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Town Council offices be closed from 16:00 on Thursday 24th December 2026 until 08:45 on Monday 4th January 2027 inclusive, with two days deducted from the leave entitlement of all staff

2. Café and House in the Basement staff be given equivalent holiday subject to the opening hours of the premises

3. £600 be set aside for a staff Christmas get-together and refreshments to enable the various departments to celebrate together

4. Staff be offered one free ticket to the Holly Party at the Bat & Ball Centre on 11th December 2026.

456 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Committee received and considered the Town Clerk's Report which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** to note details relating to:

1. Insurance for employees over 90

2. RIDDOR notification

3. Town Clerk's International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) role arrangements

4. Town Clerk's declaration relating to hospitality

457 STC BUSINESS CONTINUITY & SUCCESSION PLANNING

The Committee considered the matter of Sevenoaks Town Council business continuity and succession planning in relation to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/Town Clerk.

A discussion took place regarding the arrangements in place to ensure continuity of operations in the event of the absence or departure of the CEO/Town Clerk, and the steps that might be taken to address succession planning for this post.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be received and noted.

458 PRESS RELEASE

No press releases were agreed.

The meeting closed at 19:32.

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Signed: _____

Chair of the Personnel Committee

Date: _____

UNAPPROVED MINUTES