



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF EXTRAORDINARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE GREENACRE CENTRE, STOTFOLD, BEDS SG5 4HG, ON TUESDAY
14 JANUARY 2025 AT 19:00**

Present: Cllr S Buck (Chair), Cllr S Hayes (Vice Chair), Cllr J Bendell, Cllr M Cooper, Cllr J Headington, Cllr J Hyde, Cllr D Matthews, Cllr L Miller, Cllr J Smith, Cllr B Saunders, Cllr J Talbot, Cllr B Woods, Cllr N Venneear

Apologies:

Cllr Liz Anderson, Cllr S Dhaliwal (attended virtually)

Also Present:

E Payne, Town Clerk
P Hodson, CEO Dunstable Town Council
1 Member of the Public

Mr Hodson was introduced to the meeting, as the CEO and Town Clerk at Dunstable Town Council and Chairman of the Bedfordshire Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

359/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Anderson and Dhaliwal.

DECISION: It was RESOLVED to accept apologies

360/25 DISCLOSURES OF MEMBERS INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interest.

361/25 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Following the request from five Members of the Council to review the Scheme of Delegation, adopted by the Town Council in October 2024, Members received a report outlining the background to the Scheme. The extant version of the Scheme of Delegation had been disseminated to all members, accompanied by a proposal encompassing some modifications for review. An invitation was extended for questions and discussions on the proposed amendments. Mr Hodson offered insights into the procedures employed in other councils to ensure congruence with responsibilities and best practices.

A key point of discussion was the role and responsibilities of the Town Clerk, the highest remunerated officer within the organization, accountable for a variety of functions, including HR and operational management. The Scheme of Delegation delineates the Town Clerk's duties and roles. The necessity of any amendments to the Scheme of Delegation was deliberated, with a particular emphasis on the delegated responsibility for staff and the incorporation of advice from the HR provider where applicable.

The amendments to the Scheme included the addition of a clause for soliciting advice from the HR provider were necessary and the reporting of delegated



decisions to the relevant committees or the Council. A debate ensued regarding the necessity of these amendments, given the Clerk's autonomous consultations with the HR provider.

Concerns were raised about the lack of communication concerning staff dismissals, which had given rise to rumours and speculation among Councillors. The discussion gravitated towards the need for a more structured approach to handling such matters, with suggestions to include a small group of councillors in dismissal decisions to ensure transparency and prevent personal biases. However, Members were advised against this, highlighting the importance of allowing the Town Clerk to manage staff matters independently to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure compliance with employment law.

The debate also explored the potential establishment of a staffing committee, as recommended by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), to handle employment matters. However, it was noted that the current Governance and Resources Committee already supervises policies and terms of service for employees.

In conclusion, the meeting concurred that the proposed amendments to the Scheme of Delegation, including the explicit mention of consulting the HR provider, should be adopted.

DECISION: The Scheme of Delegation 2025 is adopted.

362/25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 29 January 2025.

The meeting was then formally adjourned at 7:33 PM.

SIGNED BY CHAIR:

MINUTES APPROVED (date):