

18th of January, 2024

Minutes of the Employment Committee meeting of Llandybie Community Council held at the Council Offices, High Street, Llandybie and online via Microsoft Teams on Monday, 18th of January, 2024 at 6.30 p.m.

Present

Councillors C. Thomas Mrs A.E. Evans A. Jones
R.A. Davies

Attended online D. Thomas

Apologies S. E. Thomas

Absent: D. Jones I.RH. Llewelyn

375.

Declarations of Interest

There were none.

376.

To receive apologies for absence

Cllr S. E. Thomas.

377.

Clerk to explanation of latest pay structure.

The Clerk went through in detail the pay structure of the position of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer and the Administration Officer and outlined the starting salary that was advertised as Point Scales 29 to 32 on the SLCC official pay structure with 'pay award pending' and the resulting national pay award that was added to this in December 2022 after he had started the role.

The Clerk further explained that he had not taken up the option of an increment to point 30 in April 2023 as he felt he needed a full year in the post and was happy with the national pay award added to his pay so early in starting the role. But wanted it noted he had not accepted extra remuneration in covering for the vacant Administration Assistant role in June and July of 2023 even though it had been minute that he could do so.

The Clerk further explained that a further national Pay had been agreed nationally and for the second year at 6%, this was backdated to April 2023 and he further explained that the point scale of the role was still on 29 but it would go up to 30 in April 2024.

The Clerk asked for any questions on the point of the structure of the salary since starting the role in December 2022.

Cllr A. Jones asked if now was a good time they have a Job Review in terms of the role and the hours needed to carry out the role. The Clerk interjected that whilst he

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was always flexible, he had a contract in place and that changing that contract or reducing his hours would mean that he would be looking at other employment opportunities as he was not in a position in terms of age or in a financial position to accept a reduction in hours. The Clerk further stated that the time to review the job role would have been before advertising the position in October 2022.

Cllr A. Jones stated that he wanted to assure the Clerk that it was not a personal comment in terms of the Clerk and his performance or in any way meant to undermine his employment contract that was in place, but merely to ascertain what the correct hours of service should apply to the role whether more hours and pay or less and that he felt a review under the advice and guidance of One Voice Wales would at least show the council was seeking to prove it was delivering value for money against the precept. And that perhaps example in other Community Councils could be looked at as a benchmark. It also noted that qualifications such as CILCA would be advantageous to the role, Cllr R. A., Davies at this point asked for an update as the Clerk had said at interview that he would look at undertaking the CILCA qualification. The Clerk explained that it had been a busy year but was exploring the option in terms of cost and time for the coming year.

The Chair Cllr C. Thomas wanted it noted that the Clerk should not feel in any way that his job role was being brought into question or was in jeopardy and this was acknowledged by councillors present and asked if such a review had taken place in recent years.

Cllr R. A. Davies stated that he did not believe it had been and that he felt that a job review was a good idea, especially when in future if he was asked by residents to justify the pay of the Clerk and staff and that he could point to an independent review as a way of evidencing value for money.

The Clerk pointed out that the pay of staff was confidential and should not be discussed with members of the public outside the meeting, Cllr A. Jones reminded the Clerk that pay of staff like other matters was a matter of public record, The Clerk agreed but wanted it noted that it was inappropriate for staff pay to be discussed in general conversation outside meetings and the presence of staff names each month in against payments of salary in the finance section of Ordinary Meetings should be enough.

Cllr R. A. Davies asked for further explanation on the current pay and confirmation of the pay that would be in place from April 2024 and what the total staff salary budget would be. The Clerk explained that the figures were clearly outlined in the document that he had provided and that the current budget for staffing without consulting the budget was circa £53k but it would exceed that this financial year as the he as Clerk had worked alongside the previous Clerk for a month in December 2022 which meant the previous Clerks wage cost was not catered for when the budget was set for the year 2022/23.

Cllr R. A. Davies enquired further about the effect of staff pensions on the overall cost, The Clerk explained that the previous Clerk and the Administrative Assistant had chosen not to take part in the mandatory require of the council as an employer to pay pension payments. The Clerk further confirmed that he had not taken any

pension payments in his first year either but that both himself and the Administration Officer had now decide to opt in and that he as Clerk was now asking the Dyfed Pension Fund and the NEST Scheme to put proposals together. Cllr R. A. Davies wanted to know how much this would add to the staff budget, The Clerk explained that pension payments are mandatory but felt with detailed figures it would add circa £6 to £8k.

Cllr A. Jones felt that the Job Review would be a good idea and asked for agreement that the Clerk explore this option, The Clerk once again agreed that he would but that his contract was non-negotiable and that he wanted it noted that this review should have taken place before the job was advertised. Cllr A. Jones reiterated that the Clerks contract was not in his opinion in question which was confirmed by Cllr R. A. Davies who stated that it was merely an exercise to show that the council was scrutinising its value for money stance especially if the precept was raised in the coming years.

Cllr A. E. Evans pointed out that whilst comments had been made that the role of Clerk had become easier since asset transfer had been concluded she felt that this was playing down many aspects that had been added to the role.

The Chair Cllr C. Thomas wanted this made clear and didn't want the Clerk to feel his role was in question or that he was undervalued.

The Clerk concluded the agenda item by explaining the pay structure of the Administration Officer and that it was Set and advertised at Point 5 of the official SLCC pay structure and that due to the National Pay ward of 6% announced in November 2023 the hourly rate had increased and was backdated to the commencement of the role on August 1st 2023.

The Clerk explained for future reference that the Job did not have a sliding pay structure and was static on Point 5 and would rely on National Pay awards in future to realise any increases.

It was agreed to accept the Clerks report on pay structures as correct and **to recommend** that the Clerk explore the cost and availability of One Voice Wales to conduct a Job Review of the position of Clerk and Financial Responsible Officer and report **for ratification** if One Voice Wales agreed it was feasible at the next Ordinary Meeting on July the 31st 2024.

378.

Chair to give an overview of Clerk's Annual Appraisal.

The Chair gave an overview of the first Annual Appraisal of the Clerk and Financial Responsible Officer that was conducted as a one to one exercise.

Cllr R. A. Davies felt it was an unfair burden on the Chair to have to personally conduct the appraisal, the Chair stated that she had merely followed the procedure of previous years.

Chair

The Clerk confirmed that the Standing Order of Point 19 'Staff Matters' had been followed and he had consulted the previous Clerk for confirmation on what had previously happened and followed up with an email to One Voice Wales which was copied into the Chair to confirm the process was correct.

The Chair confirmed that she had conducted the appraisal based on the format and form that had been previously used and that she was giving an overall all grade of B in reflection of the internal and external training the Clerk had undertaken and that she was impressed by his vision for the future of the role. The Chair further noted that she felt that The Clerk was a very honest and open person and sometimes too concerned with being transparent.

Cllr R. A. Davies asked at this point if he could ask again about the extra pay and pension payments from the previous agenda item and how much it would add to the staff budget, the Clerk explained that without consulting detail figures it would be circa £8 or £9k.

The Chair went back to the agenda and concluded that the Annual Appraisal had been a two way discussion and it had been completed, Cllr A. Jones asked that it now be held on file and as a true record.

379.

Clerk to give an overview of staff training for 2024/25

The Clerk gave a brief overview of training intentions and referenced initial training he and the Administration Officer had experienced by shadowing the Park Inspector.

The Clerk further explained that he felt the issue around park inspections had left the council vulnerable after the inspector previously contracted had ceased undertaking the service without notice. Cllr A. E. Evans felt a tender exercise should be undertaken and the Clerk explained in the light of the urgency he had undertaken this and three quotes had been received with one at £9,000 and two at closer to the current cost of £4,000.

Cllr A. Jones asked for detail and the Clerk explained that Llanon Community had helped out in offering the services of their inspector which meant our inspections for December and January were up to date and we were covered in terms of indemnity.

Cllr A. Jones and Cllr A. E. Evans asked for clarification on the Clerks stated intention to train to undertake the inspections himself and save the council £4k per annum. The Clerk explained that 2 day course at £600 would enable him to be qualified to do the inspections. Both councillors asked if 'marking our own work' was acceptable and the Clerk said whilst he would explore the technicalities the Annual Inspection by the County Council would ratify the work.

Cllr A. Jones asked that this be looked at and reported to Full Council on the 31st to pass the cost of the training that was not currently budgeted.

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As there was no further business to discuss, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 7.20 p.m.