
MEETING OF PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

HELD ON 9TH JULY 2021 AT 4.30PM AT THE STEYNING CENTRE

Present: Cllrs Young, Norcross, Hanson, I Alexander, Bell, Northam and Lloyd

Clerk : John Fullbrook **Deputy Clerk :** Hazel Roxby

Members of the Public: 2 including Cllr Goldsmith

Meeting commenced: 11am

MINUTES (Non-Confidential)

Pe/21/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence from Councillors.

Pe/21/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 Cllr Alexander declared a personal interest as has had personal issues with the Cllrs in the past.

Pe/21/03 QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

3.1.1 Q. Cllr Goldsmith read out an email statement from himself and Cllr Campbell.

We are jointly the sole subjects of the meeting. We wish it to be minuted that I object to the matter being discussed in confidential session. The accusations, the evidence and the discussion should all be in the public domain so far as we are concerned. We also wish it to be minuted that we formally object to the failure to give us any opportunity to attend and defend ourselves and that I do not even know what it is I am accused of because that seems to have changed from the wording on the agenda. Our Question is 'what is the explanation for this meeting which has now moved away from what we are actually accused of on the agenda'. "Excessive sending" - no attempt to justify. Cynically seeking to unreasonably "increase the office workload" – no attempt to justify "Micro-manage their work" – no attempt to justify. The reason, we suggest, is because there was never any evidence to support, or basis for, these allegations and the agenda is being used to bully by humiliation. The repeated accusation from this Committee and the Clerk, which Cllr Lloyd has also made in public, that we are seeking to increase the office workload is not only insulting to our integrity but is clearly without foundation because the theme of our tenure on the Council almost from day one has been frustration that so often our decisions are not implemented, or we are provided with inadequate information far too late in the day. Instead, the allegations are now about:- "Tone and content"; and Email policy not being followed in some unspecified way. We are reminded of a previous grievance procedure concerning one of the Clerks predecessors where the independent panel pointed out that a clerk is in effect the chief executive and should be able to handle reasonable challenge and questions. I do not think anything in our recent emails justifies the calling of this meeting. As for addressing emails through the Chair which you now describe as a "request". There was never a request. As you have quoted : - the Committee recommended "to Council that all emails and correspondence from Cllrs. Campbell and Goldsmith to the Council's staff be directed through the Chair of the Council for the present time" This is exactly what happens, as the Clerk informed us all that he has set up a rule

to auto forward any email from us so that it goes to Cllr Norcross. Because of this procedure it means that we have no means of knowing when or whether the Clerk has received any of our emails unless or until they are acknowledged. This is not a way to build healthy working relationships which are central to a properly functioning council focussed on delivering services to its residents. Further we wish it to be minuted that we believe an inappropriate process is being used, as in the case of Harvey, just as it was when this process was introduced.

- 3.1.2 A. **Cllr Northam stated that Cllrs Goldsmith and Campbell are not the subject of this meeting it is actually about protecting the Staff**
- 3.1.3 A. **Cllr Norcross addressed the issue that Cllrs Goldsmith and Campbell were stating that they were not given the opportunity of being able to attend the meeting - Cllr Goldsmith has attended and Cllr Campbell was given ample opportunity to attend but has chosen not to. Concerning the statement of not being able to defend themselves, the meeting is not a court of law or tribunal, both were aware of the issues and both are the authors of the emails and therefore there is no need to defend themselves.**
- 3.2.1 Q Trevor Cree stated that he would like to make a representation about items 6.1 and 6.2 and ask a question. 'In my sincere opinion the issues being discussed today in confidential sessions originate from the SPC EOM dated 20th August 2020, a serious error of judgement was made. That meeting was instigated by Councillors Lloyd and Northam and led to the removal of the Premises Committee and establishing a Personnel Committee'
- 3.2.2 **Cllr Norcross made a point of order that the statement was not relevant to the agenda. The Chairman allowed him to continue but requested he speak to the agenda.**
- 3.3.3 Trevor continued 'Establishing a Personnel Committee increasing work and reducing the number of SPC meetings has exacerbated the SPC problems and work of the SPC Clerk rather than reducing it. It should be noted that a Councillor should declare a prejudicial interest if a member of the public who knows the relevant facts would reasonably think your personal interest so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest in this content. I will refer to a personal prejudice that a councillor may have against another that impairs their judgement rather than in the business context, namely is one councillor fit to sit in judgement of another, in relation to item 6.1 the SPC Chairman is clearly prejudice against Councillor Campbell and Goldsmith'
- 3.2.4 **Cllr Young asked Trevor to stop at this point as his statement had no relevance to the meeting, as the meeting and discussion is about safeguarding the staff. Trevor Cree continued to speak over the Chairman**
- 3.2.5 Cllr Northam **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross that under Standing Order 2b that Trevor Cree be asked to leave the meeting. **Agreed**
Trevor Cree left the meeting.

Pe/21/04 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4.1 Cllr Young **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd that the Personnel Committee non confidential minutes from 23rd March 2021 be accepted as a true and fair record. **Agreed 5 for and 2 abstentions.**
- 4.2 Cllr Young **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd that the Personnel Committee confidential minutes from 23rd March 2021 be accepted as a true and fair record. **Agreed 5 for and 2 abstentions**

Pe/21/05 CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

- 5.1 Cllr Norcross **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Lloyd to resolve under Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, in accordance with Standing Orders 3d to exclude the press and public on the grounds that the confidential matters to be discussed under item 6 may involve disclosure of personal or privileged information which would be inappropriate to put in the public domain. **Agreed.**
Cllr Goldsmith left the meeting.

Pe/21/06 TO DISCUSS AND AGREE ACTION TO BE TAKEN REGARDING.

- 6.1 **The continued sending of email correspondence to the Clerk by two Councillors, despite the Full Council agreement that they direct these through the Chairman.**

6.2 The Continuing excessive sending of email to the Clerk by two Councillors, which are deemed to be unreasonable attempts to increase the office workload and micro-manage their work.

It was noted that Cllrs do not have an admin, managerial or supervisory role, they are not supposed to instruct the Clerk or staff nor impose their will on the Clerk or the staff.

If Councillors have issues with the Clerk or Staff or believe that they are not able to carry out their work correctly it should be reported to the Personnel Committee so that the issues can be discussed and dealt with properly.

The Clerk was asked to send out to all councillors a reminder of the Councillors roles and Responsibilities.

Clerk

It was felt that the continued behaviour of the two Cllrs is against the code of conduct policy and a complaint should be considered.

6.3 Cllrs discussed what other actions are available to the council and can realistically be used to ensure that the Clerk's Office do not continue to receive these emails as the Council has a duty of care to protect the Staff from this continued unacceptable behaviour.

Cllr Lloyd **proposed, seconded** by Cllr Norcross that the committee recommends to Full Council to seek legal advice as to how the council can protect its Staff, as a matter of urgency, from members supervising, instructing, or imposing their will on the staff. **Agreed.**

Committee

Pe/21/07 DATE OF NEXT FULL COUNCIL MEETING: Monday 21st June 2021 at 7.30pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 11.55 am

Signed

Chairman