

QUORN PARISH COUNCIL STAFFING REVIEW REPORT

At the Council meeting on 8 January 2019 Quorn Parish Council considered in detail a **confidential Staffing Review** report prepared by Chris Rolley Associates. This review came about following a recommendation made by Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils (LRALC) in Autumn 2018.

Chairman of the Council, Councillor David Cawdell, confirmed that the review had addressed the issues requested by the Council. He and fellow councillors felt it proposed a sensible and sustainable approach to addressing the Council's forward staffing needs and it was pleasing that the report and all 12 recommendations had been well received. The Council's HR Committee was tasked with preparing an implementation plan for the recommendations.

The report's Executive Summary had stated:.

“Overall this review considers that the Parish Council is at a key period in its development. There is clear evidence of ambition in terms of service provision and there have been many positive achievements. Historically some projects have not been progressed as smoothly as they might because governance structures have lacked clarity. The structural failings have their roots in capacity overload, and because roles and responsibilities have not been understood as they might; not because of individual shortcomings. The key foci to date appear to have been on administration rather than management, and on fire-fighting.

There is little evidence of clear strategic direction and intent in issues of forward planning and development, though the Neighbourhood Plan is one area which bucks this trend. The Council's current structures are not considered appropriate or fit for purpose. This has been recognised and LRALC is actively working with the Council to improve matters here.

There is currently little synergy between the staff establishment and the Council's democratic services, and the latter's terms of reference have significant overlaps of accountabilities which can confuse and is evidenced as causing conflict. This in turn leads to staff and councillor involvement in attempting to resolve misunderstandings, all of which gives added pressure to the Parish Clerk and her team. This also is being reviewed by LRALC.

The report recognises that there are too few members of staff to meet the administrative and operational needs of the Council. This has come to a head with the development and opening of the Old School Building, but capacity would be an issue still needing addressing regardless of this project, but not on the scale now identified.

The review acknowledges the considerable time and effort that councillors give to their roles. Motivations are not questioned. However in many aspects some councillors have stepped beyond their defined role and performed duties that are the preserve of paid staff. In part this has been because without this intervention things would not get

done. However what is unacceptable is when this has transcended into individual councillors pursuing personal agendas, and instructing officers, where they have no powers to do so. This is clearly demotivating, is damaging to the Council's corporate image, specifically in the wider community, and leaves the Council open to challenge. As a consequence the proposals contained within this report for enhanced staff hours are focussed on those key areas of the Council's operations where such interventions have been most apparent and where current resource levels are most inadequate.

The solutions proposed within this report include a clearer demarcation of roles and accountability, the creation of some new posts to address capacity issues and areas of identified need and for a much greater focus on performance management, and training and development. These are all fully evidenced within the report and subject to formal recommendations”.

The report's recommendations were as follows:

Recommendation 1: That a new full-time post of Facilities Officer is created on a point within salary scale LC2 above substantive, on spinal point 28 and that the duties and person specification for this post are broadly in accordance with the draft proposals contained in Appendices C and D.

Recommendation 2: That the existing Assistant Clerk be re-designated Administrative Officer and that the job description for this post be amended as indicated on the job description, at Appendix E.

Recommendation 3: That a new post of Senior Administrative Officer, part-time 20 hours per week, is created on a point within salary scale LC1, on spinal point 23 and that the duties and person specification for this post are broadly in accordance with the draft proposals contained in Appendices F and G.

Recommendation 4: That an additional five hours per week be allocated for the Assistant Grounds person post, thereby increasing the current contract of 15 hours per week to 20 per week.

Recommendation 5: That a gross sum of £15,000 initially be allocated for cleaning/caretaking and that the Council seek to appoint a cleaner/caretaker for both the Village Hall and Old School on a minimum weekly contract hours of 20 hours for those areas with some flexibility in working hours to meet the exigencies of the service, and this sum to include some provision for casual cleaning/caretaking at weekends.

Recommendation 6: That a staffing structure be approved in accordance with proposals contained in section 6 and Appendix H.

Recommendation 7: That an Officer's Management Team is constituted in accordance with proposals set out in paragraph 5.17.

Recommendation 8: That Quorn Parish Council should approve and implement a staff appraisal system at the earliest opportunity, not later than prior to the end of 2018/2019 civic year.

Recommendation 9: That the Council should consider entering into a contractual arrangement with an external HR service provider that will meet the Council's requirements in terms of the scope of service required, including management of financial risk, and the Parish Clerk be asked to produce a detailed options report with recommendation prior to the commencement of 2019/2020 civic year.

Recommendation 10: That the Council must ensure that any changes to staff job descriptions are fully discussed with affected staff prior to implementation, having regard to advice/guidance from the Council's external HR advisers.

Recommendation 11: That Quorn Parish Council needs to review its existing Training and Development policies and then regularly review these. Once annually at the commencement of each civic year a detailed report on staff and member training undertaken in the previous year should be reported to the appropriate Standing Committee for public record.

Recommendation 12: That Quorn Parish Council should reaffirm that it actively welcomes volunteer support in areas of community benefit, recognising the responsibility of such individuals and groups to work in accordance with the requirements of the Council as laid down in documented policy or as delegated to the Parish Clerk in accordance with her position as the Council's Proper Officer.

This note issued by Christina Gibbs, Clerk to Quorn Parish Council, with the authority of the Council – February 2019