Longridge
Town Council

Staffing Committee – Draft Minutes

Date:	22 July 2026		
Place:	Station Buildings, Berry Lane, Longridge.		
Present:	Councillors: Eccles, and Walbank		
In Attendance:	Town Clerk, Cllr. Stubbs, Cllr. Walker		
Meeting Started:	18.32	**Meeting Closed**	19.45

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR 2026/27

Cllr. Natalie Eccles was nominated and accepted the role of Chair of the Staffing Committee for the 2026/27 civic year.

RESOLVED:

Cllr. Natalie Eccles be elected Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2026/27.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR 2026/27

Cllr. Andrew Wallbank was nominated and accepted the role of Vice-Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2026/27 civic year.

RESOLVED:

Cllr. Andrew Wallbank be elected Vice-Chair of the Staffing Committee for 2026/27.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Lee Jameson and Cllr. Mark Gornall.

No apologies were received from Cllr. Keiran Spencer.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in relation to items on the agenda.

5. CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2026 were approved and signed by the Chair.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

There was no public participation.

Part 1 OPEN SESSION – ITEMS for DECSION/DISCUSSION

7. APPROVE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE.

RESOLVED
The Terms of Reference for the 2026/27 civic year be approved.

8. COVER FOR THE CARETAKER AND GARDENER

The Committee considered the recruitment of an individual to provide ad hoc cover for the caretaker/gardener.

The vacancy had been advertised through the Council's Facebook page, website and Notice Board. Three people had expressed an interest and one application had been received, from Andrew Leonard.

Members noted that Mr Leonard already provided services to the Council and was known to members. The proposed arrangement would be for Mr Leonard to act as a preferred contractor providing ad hoc cover rather than as an employee. The previously agreed rate was £20 per hour.

The Committee discussed the pre-engagement checks that might be appropriate, including whether a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check was required. It was noted that the work would not normally involve regulated activity or direct contact with children or vulnerable adults. Nevertheless, the Clerk was asked to confirm the applicable requirements before the arrangement commenced.

RESOLVED:

a. That the appointment of Andrew Leonard as the Council's preferred contractor for ad hoc caretaker and gardener cover be approved in principle at the agreed rate of £20 per hour.
b. That the appointment be subject to satisfactory completion of all relevant checks and contractual arrangements.
c. That the Clerk confirm whether a DBS check is appropriate or legally available for the duties concerned before the appointment proceeds.

Part 1 OPEN SESSION – ITEMS for INFORMATION

9. UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED
That the Report be noted.

10. CONSIDERATIONS OF MATTERS NOT ON THE AGENDA

DEPUTY CLERK'S CONTRACTED HOURS.

The Committee considered increasing the Deputy Clerk's contracted hours to support succession and continuity planning and to enable administrative and meeting-related duties to be redistributed.

It was noted that:

- The Town Clerk was contracted to work 30 hours per week but regularly worked additional unpaid hours.
- The Deputy Clerk was contracted to work six hours per week and worked those hours.
- Increasing the Deputy Clerk's hours would assist her development in agenda preparation, minute-taking and basic financial administration.
- Thursday would be a suitable additional working day because the Town Clerk was not normally in the office that day.

An initial increase to 10 or 12 hours per week was discussed initially on a trial or fixed-term basis.

The Committee noted that the full financial implications required confirmation, including salary, employer's National Insurance contributions, pension auto-enrolment and payroll costs. The indicative annual cost was approximately £6,000. Potential funding sources included underspends and relevant reserves, subject to Full Council approval.

Members emphasised that the proposal was intended to improve resilience, provide cover and redistribute work. It was not intended to reduce the Town Clerk's contracted hours or salary.

RESOLVED:

a. That the Committee support, in principle, increasing the Deputy Clerk's contracted hours from six to 10/12 hours per week on an initial trial or fixed-term basis.
b. That the Deputy Clerk's willingness and availability to work the proposed additional hours be confirmed.
c. That the Clerk consult the Council's payroll provider and prepare a detailed report setting out the salary, National Insurance, pension and payroll implications.
d. That the proposal and identified funding source be referred to a meeting of the Staffing Committee in September 2026.

TOWN CLERK ANNUAL LEAVE AND DUTY OF CARE

The Committee noted that the Town Clerk had taken approximately two and a half weeks of annual leave and discussed the Council's duty of care to ensure that employees took appropriate rest and annual leave.

The Town Clerk acknowledged the Committee's concerns and advised that he was likely to take leave during September/October 2026. Members noted that increasing the Deputy Clerk's hours and improving cover arrangements would make it easier for the Town Clerk to take annual leave.

RESOLVED:

a. That the Committee's concerns regarding the need for the Town Clerk to take appropriate annual leave be noted.
b. That suitable cover arrangements be developed to enable the Town Clerk to take his remaining leave entitlement.

CCTV, SIGNAGE AND DATA PROTECTION

The Committee discussed the cameras installed within the Council office. The cameras had been installed primarily for staff safety because the Town Clerk frequently worked alone.

Members noted that the existing signage might not satisfy current data protection requirements. Members considered that any replacement signage should be clear without appearing unnecessarily intimidating.

RESOLVED:

a. That the adequacy of the Council's CCTV signage be reviewed and if required compliant replacement signage obtained.
b. That the Council's CCTV policy, retention arrangements, access procedures and recording log be reviewed.
c. That the matter be referred to the Estates Committee for further consideration.

WATER BOWSER

The Committee noted the urgent need for a water bowser to fill planter tanks at locations without access to a tap.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk contact RVBC regarding the possibility of borrowing or hiring a water bowser, with the aim of securing one for the following weekend if practicable.

11. FUTUTURE MEETINGS

16 September 2026

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolution to Exclude Press and Public

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, being personnel matters relating to identifiable individuals, it was proposed that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the agenda, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (Schedule 12A, paragraphs 1 and 2).

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business, as the items to be discussed involve exempt information relating to individuals.

13. PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE TOWN CLERK/RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next Staffing Committee meeting