



Minutes of Personnel Committee held at 1:00pm on 10 July 2026 at the Caldicot Town Council Building, Sandy Lane, Caldicot NP26 4NA

Present: Committee Members:

Mayor Shillabeer
Cllr Mitchell
Cllr Strong
Cllr Cochrane
Cllr Higginson

Also Present: Alice Vaughan – Temporary Locum Clerk

Present – Members of Council (Not Committee Members)

Cllr A McIntyre
Cllr Harris
Cllr Barrett

Members of the Public – x1

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive apologies for absence from Cllr Rowberry and Cllr Owen

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4. Public Question Time and Participation

Discussion over an email/letter that was removed from the council's website after a public request highlighting that a summary could be done by author. The original author did not make the removal request; it was a third party with concerns. It was explained the document may reappear as a summary (not the full email) at a future meeting. Clarification that staff had no indication the original email was confidential, as not marked as confidential and it was sent from a Monmouthshire County Council address.

Concerns raised about the ability of a committee to impartially investigate itself, especially in the context of past grievances or allegations.

Member commented discomfort over committee members adjudicating their own actions. It was clarified there is a right to refer matters to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and some issues had indeed been referred and subsequently dismissed with no evidence found.

Some members expressed frustration over a lack of transparency and continued public upset (notably referencing a previously distressed member of the public at an earlier meeting). Personnel Committee confirmed an investigation into these past matters had already been conducted by an independent body; findings may be shareable depending on their content. The NDA restricts the disclosure of specific costs and details; however, both parties agreed to the terms voluntarily and the outcome has been finalised for several months.

A request for specific figures regarding council spending on HR consultants, investigations, and related legal costs. Committee clarified that direct HR and investigation costs relating totalled under £3,000. No other substantial consultancy or agency costs directly attributed. Concerns addressed over rumoured costs, with committee reiteration that speculative figures circulating in the community are inaccurate. Annual governance and financial reports will include all appropriate figures for public scrutiny.

Debate over whether the council should revert to a combined Clerk/RFO role or continue with separate appointments. Comments expressed that creating separated roles led to problems; others countered that the problems were more complex and not linked to this change. The rationale for the Clerk's salary banding was discussed—mainly as a market-driven necessity to attract qualified applicants, requiring a differential between deputy and lead roles. Members referenced market salary to justify pay scales and recruitment strategies.

5. Minutes

Members noted the confidential minutes from FTC meeting held on the 24 June 2026.

6. Recruitment of Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk/RFO

Members noted that recruitment for the Deputy Clerk position has not yet commenced as the job specification and associated documentation are currently being finalised. The advertisement has been delayed allowing all Members the opportunity to review the updated job description prior to publication. Recruitment for the Clerk position will take place later in the year.

Members considered a proposal to outsource elements of the recruitment process to One Voice Wales. A detailed breakdown of the associated costs was presented. Following discussion, it was agreed that the services outlined below would provide valuable support to the recruitment process.

- 1) To act as the main point for issues and receipt of Job Application forms as well as acknowledgement of forms -£7 for each application from received up to a maximum of £200
- 2) To provide a draft set of questions and model answers/ written exercises for the shortlisting panel to consider for both posts – linked directly to the employee specification – and include scoring sheets - £150.00
- 3) To travel to office and attend the interviews and provide advice to the Appointment panel = depends on the duration but the cost would be based on £69.00 per hour (Estimate of 9 hours including travel) = £621 (Assumes interviews will be held for both posts on the same day

Committee agreed to go ahead with the agreed support services provided by One Voice Wales above.

7. Staffing

Staffing described as “extremely short”: Temporary Locum Clerk working 20 hours/week. Admin office 25 hours and 9 hours and Facilities part time hours Summer leave creates additional coverage constraints; office closures may occur during periods of no staff. Volunteers are encouraged; admin support offers from members noted.

8. Correspondence Received from Councillor Anthony Easson

Agreed if a summary is submitted correspondence will be on a future agenda. Council intends to respond to each point in the summary at a future council meeting, so that answers are minuted.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Next regular Personnel Committee meeting scheduled for 11th September 2026, with the possibility of an additional meeting if the recruitment progress necessitates it.

Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED By virtue of The Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public are excluded from discussions on the following item on the basis that disclosure thereof would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

10. COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

All councillors who were not members of the Personnel Committee, together with the member of the public left the meeting. The meeting then reconvened in a separate meeting room.

Exempt Business

The Committee considered the exempt items as detailed on the agenda.

11. Staffing Matters

The details of discussions and resolutions relating to exempt business are recorded in the confidential minutes.

Update on all staff.

Meeting ended at 2:30pm

Signed **Date**

Chair