Batheaston Parish Council – HR Committee Meeting 2nd May 2024
Comments on the Standard Employment Contract proposed to be adopted

Introduction

The National Association of Local Councils released a Model Contract of Employment in December 2023. I have used this as the basis for a contract which we will use for current and future employees, as and when the need or opportunity to re-issue contracts arises.

The Committee is asked to approve this standard contract, noting the comments below, which reflect the questions of substance that have arisen in the review of the contract.

Detailed Comments

Preamble

I am suggesting that BPC staff policies do form part of the contract of employment (and thus I need to ensure that all staff have access to or copies of up-to-date policies, in an HR handbook)

4. DUTIES

The sub-bullets (i) – (iv) under "The Council requires the highest standards from you …" which – while being very laudable and unarguable – are I believe unenforceable. I propose to delete them.

(v) regarding the reporting wrongdoing – seems OK to me (I am not aware of any legislation that this conflicts with, such as Whistleblowing).

The sixth bullet (names "(vii)") is fine.

5. PLACE OF WORK
I have amended this to specify "the centre of Batheaston" as the Council's premises (alongside working from home, for roles for which this applies).

I have specified the requirement to travel as being within the UK.

6. WORKING HOURS
I have left in the standard text regarding the "normal working hours", even though this applies only to one of our 4 employees. We may wish to substitute a phrase that specifies hours worked over a period of time (per month, I would suggest) in each of these 3 contracts.

8. TRAINING
I have added the stipulation that staff will be paid for the time to undertake training that is required for their job.

9. PAY AND BENEFITS

I propose to delete the paragraph about automatic annual increments within a specified range. It is not included in current staff contracts. We should however ensure that we re-evaluate roles periodically.

I am proposing that all staff be paid on 26th of the month (or the latest working day before then), which is the case for 3 of the 4 staff currently. The exception is my contract, which is payable on the 28th, so will be brought forward 2 days.

10. EXPENSES – Home Working Allowance

This is included in my current contract, and should be added to other staff who work from home (currently the Booking Clerk). Note that the allowance should cover providing an appropriate office space with necessary services (heating, lighting, electricity, connection to internet, etc).
The Council will provide (or reimburse for):

- Purchase or use of office equipment
- Purchase of office consumables
- Connection, rental or use of telephone line and Internet/broad band (where this fulfils the legislative requirement; to be exclusively needed for work purposes)

14. ABSENCE FOR SICKNESS OR INJURY, AND SICK PAY

This reflects the "Green Book", providing sick pay, rising to 6 months full pay, 6 months half pay after 5 years' service (which applies to all but me). Councillors may wish to consider reducing this, although this would diverge from sector practice.

15. PENSION

I have added text to allow for an employee to choose another scheme, or to opt out (which is included in legislation). Note that the contract is written only to allow for the minimum contribution, as specified in legislation.

Richard Maccabee
Parish Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer
30th April 2024