

MINUTES OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
OF BIRCHWOOD TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT PARKERS FARM, DELENTY DRIVE
ON TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2026 AT 5.00PM

Committee Members Present

Cllr Ian Atkin (Chair)
Cllr Nigel Reeves
Cllr David Ball
Cllr Tim Price
Cllr David Ellis (Ex-Officio Member with Voting Rights)
Cllr Julie Brereton (Ex-Officio Member with Voting Rights)

Also Present:

Ms Safia Kauser	Locum Clerk/RFO
Mrs Hannah Thomas	Deputy Clerk/Deputy RFO

001/26-27 (P) CONFIRMATION OF COMMITTEE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

It was noted that Cllr Ian Atkin was appointed Chair and Cllr David Ball was appointed Vice-Chair of the Committee at the Annual Council Meeting for the 2026/2027 Municipal Year.

002/26-27 (P) APOLOGIES

None received. All members were present.

003/26-27 (P) DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY & OTHER INTERESTS

None declared.

004/26-27 (P) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present. The Clerk informed members that, by virtue of the Council's Standing Orders, public participation was permitted at committee meetings.

005/26-27 (P) EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business to be transacted as it relates to confidential staffing matters and would be prejudicial to the public interest if disclosed.

006/26-27 (P) SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Committee received an update regarding sickness absence and associated employment pay implications. Following consideration of the information presented, Members discussed the ongoing management of the matter.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted; that correspondence be issued to the employee; and that ongoing welfare meetings continue to be undertaken by the Committee's nominated representatives (Cllrs Ellis & Reeves), with appropriate records maintained and due regard given to the relevant employment guidance available to the Council.

**Confidential Notes Retained on File*

Signed..... Chairman

Dated:

a) Employee Handbook

Members received and considered a copy of the Employee Handbook prepared by WorkNest and issued to employees in July 2025.

During discussion, a member raised a query regarding driving-related matters, medical conditions and whether employees are required to make disclosures to the employer. Members discussed the responsibilities of individuals in relation to notifying the DVLA of relevant matters and the distinction between personal medical information and workplace health and safety considerations.

The potential insurance implications arising from employees operating vehicles or equipment where medical conditions may affect their ability to do so safely were discussed by members. It was noted that the Council's insurance provider is Zurich.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the Employee Handbook be received and noted.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk seek further guidance from WorkNest, the Council's HR and Health & Safety advisers, regarding employee obligations to disclose matters which may affect their ability to safely operate vehicles and machinery and any related responsibilities of the Council as an employer.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk seek further information from Zurich regarding any insurance implications associated with notifiable medical conditions and the operation of vehicles and machinery by employees.

b) Employment Contracts

The Committee received and considered employment contract documentation prepared by WorkNest and NALC model contract of employment, together with a briefing note prepared by the Locum Clerk. Members also noted that employee details and relevant job descriptions would be incorporated into the adopted contract prior to issue to employees.

Following discussion, Members agreed that additional time was required to review the documentation and consider the options available.

RESOLVED: That the matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee to allow Members additional time to review the employment contract documentation prior to determining which standard contracts should be adopted.

c) Health & Safety Handbook

The Committee considered the latest version of the Health and Safety Handbook and Health and Safety Policy prepared by WorkNest. Members noted that the handbook had not previously been issued to employees, who had instead been provided with documentation prepared by the Council's former employment service provider. Members were advised that, following the Council's appointment of WorkNest as its employment advisers, it was recommended that the updated documents be reviewed and adopted to ensure compliance with current legislation and best practice.

Members further noted that WorkNest had confirmed that a draft Health and Safety Policy and Handbook had been provided to the then Town Clerk on 20 December 2024 for review and approval, but no response had been received confirming whether the Council wished to adopt the documents. Members were advised that WorkNest had confirmed that the documents could be amended and updated as

required.

Following discussion, Members were satisfied that the documents provided an appropriate framework for the Council's health and safety arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the Health and Safety Handbook and Health and Safety Policy prepared by WorkNest be adopted and issued to all employees.

008/26-27 (P) REVIEW OF EMPLOYMENT DOCUMENTATION

The Committee noted that WorkNest would undertake a review of the Council's employment documentation, including employee handbooks, to ensure that the documents remain up to date, reflect current employment legislation and best practice, and can be re-issued to employees where appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the update be received and noted.

009/26-27 (P) HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REVIEW

The Committee received a copy of the General Health and Safety Risk Assessment dated 20 January 2025 and noted that an annual Health and Safety review visit had been arranged with WorkNest for 14 July 2026. Members were advised that the review would be undertaken by WorkNest and attended by the Locum Clerk, the Senior Maintenance Officer and Cllr David Ellis.

Members noted the documentation requested by WorkNest in advance of the visit, including the Health and Safety Policy and Handbook, previous audit action plan, current Fire Risk Assessment, statutory inspection and maintenance records, accident records, training records and other relevant health and safety information.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and noted and that the Clerk, in conjunction with Cllr David Ellis, oversee the completion and update of relevant actions and documentation in preparation for the WorkNest Health and Safety review visit scheduled for 14 July 2026.

0010/26-27 (P) TRAINING FOR STAFF

The Committee received and considered the training log for the Maintenance Team, and reviewed current and outstanding training requirements. Members noted that certain training courses were subject to fixed expiry dates, whilst others did not formally expire, although refresher training was generally recommended within a five-year period.

Members noted that First Aid training was a mandatory requirement and that all employees held valid First Aid certification, with the exception of one employee whose certification is due to expire on 29 August 2026.

During discussion, Members considered the requirement for Banksman training and noted that Warrington Borough Council has its own specific requirements for works carried out on the highway. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk would make enquiries with Warrington Borough Council regarding its requirements and any available Banksman training arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the training records be received and noted.

RESOLVED: That the Maintenance Staff training log be updated to include recommended refresher training dates where applicable.

RESOLVED: That Warrington Borough Council be approached regarding

Signed..... Chairman

Dated:

Banksman training requirements and provision.

RESOLVED: That training providers be contacted to obtain details of available training courses, associated costs and availability for any outstanding and refresher training requirements.

011/26-27 (P)

RECRUITMENT – MAINTENANCE OPERATIVES

The Committee reviewed the recruitment documentation for the appointment of two Maintenance Operatives, including the draft job advertisement and job description held on file and the application form provided by CHALC.

Members considered the recruitment arrangements and agreed that the proposed documentation was suitable, subject to the advertised rate of pay being updated accordingly. Members further discussed the potential for recruiting an apprentice but concluded that, given the current staffing shortages within the Maintenance Team, such an approach would not be feasible at the present time. It was noted, however, that an apprenticeship opportunity could be considered as part of the Council's longer-term workforce planning.

RESOLVED: That the draft job advertisement, subject to the updated rate of pay being incorporated, together with the application form and job criteria, be approved.

RESOLVED: That the vacancies be advertised for a period of one month, with a closing date of 31 July 2026.

RESOLVED: That interviews be arranged following the closing date and held during August 2026, subject to application numbers and candidate availability.

012/26-27 (P)

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Due to the scheduled commencement of the Full Council Meeting at 6.00pm and the need to complete the remaining business of the Committee, it was:

RESOLVED: That the meeting be temporarily adjourned and reconvened on Tuesday, 7 July 2026 at 5.00pm, Parkers Farm.

Signed..... Chairman

Dated: