Berkswell Parish Council

Employment Policy

1. General

The Council will as a principle only employ a clerk/RFO and seek to contract out all of its other activities.

The Council will take all practical steps to ensure that its contractors are reputatable e.g. ensure they have work with other clients, provide their own equipment, manage their own time, produce risk assessment and method statements and are covered by suitable personal liability insurance etc. Such contractors are not employees.

The Council shall make use of volunteer help either directly or by partnering with groups such as the Berkswell Society and Balsall Common Lions Club. Such persons are not employees.

2. Employment Conditions

Berkswell PC clerk will be employed on a contract bespoke to Berkswell PC and not formally linked to the national agreement for clerks in view of the complexity of those conditions and their inappropriateness for a small council. The Clerk's employment conditions will be incorporated in a statement of terms and conditions of employment that will meet the legal requirements under the Employment Rights Act 1996,

- Employee's name and employer's name
- job title or a brief job description
- the date when employment began
- clerk's pay rate and when they will be paid
- clerk's hours of work
- clerk's holiday entitlement
- where the clerk will be working (if you are based in more than one place it should say this along with your employer's address)
- sick pay arrangements
- notice periods
- information about disciplinary and grievance procedures
- any collective agreements that affect the clerk's employment terms or conditions
- pensions and pension schemes

3. Setting of the salary and key conditions

3.1. The salary for the Clerk will be set relative to

3.1.1. The market for accountants and other roles similar to the role of the Clerk/RFO (including but not limited to the national agreement for Clerks)

3.1.2. The clerk's assessed contribution based on defined performance/contribution criteria

3.2. A review of the salary will be conducted annually.

3.3. Other key terms of employment will be set again by comparison to the market e.g. holidays

3.4. The Council operates a discretionary sick pay scheme

3.5. Pension provision will be a direct contribution scheme that will at least meet the legal requirement. The level of employer contribution will be set periodically following a review of the market.

3.6. An appraisal will be conducted annually based on input from the Clerk and Councillors. Its key aim is to maximise performance and the well-being of the Clerk.

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4. Hours of Work

4.1. Berkswell is a small parish and the council's assets are limited. The Clerk's role and hours reflect this. The Clerk will be employed for an average of 12 hours per week but these will be on an annualised hours basis with hours fluctuating to meet need in any particular period. It is not the Council's policy to pay for additional hours. However, exceptional workload or contribution can result in exceptional one-off bonus payments.

4.2. To ensure that the hours of work remain manageable the Councillors collectively will take all reasonable steps to

4.2.1. Minimise demands on the Clerk including not copying the clerk on emails except where critical

4.2.2. Undertake tasks to minimise the Clerk's workload under the direction/authority of the Clerk

4.2.3. Printing off their own documents etc

5. Location of employment of the Clerk

5.1. It is the Council's policy to keep its fixed overheads as low as possible. Consequently, it does not maintain an office. The Clerk will work from home and receive a home office allowance as specified in the statement of terms and conditions of employment. The Clerk will not receive travel costs for attending to Council business within the Meriden Ward and will receive a travel allowance to cover the costs incurred. In this way the Clerk does not need to seek approval for local travel. Travel outside of the Meriden Ward will be authorised and reimbursed according to Financial Regulations.

5.2. The Council will provide reasonable equipment to allow the Clerk to perform the role including but not limited to IT equipment, mobile phone, filing equipment.

5.3. It is the Clerk's responsibility as the Council's sole employee to undertake suitable risk assessments for the place of work and ensure a safe working environment. The Clerk can request suitable training if necessary or ask a specialist to assess the home "office" as part of the Council's periodic risk assessment system.

5.4. The Clerk will not be expected to meet members of the public at his/her home. The Clerk has standing authority to book a public room or meet members of the public in Balsall Common Library.

6. Cover for the Clerk

6.1. The Council has an emergency procedure in the event that the Clerk is suddenly not available

6.2. Short term absence or unavailability can be covered by Councillors volunteering to perform tasks such as calling meeting, writing minutes etc.

6.3. Longer term absence can either be covered from the community or through a clerk from the WALC Locum list.

7. Personnel File

7.1. A personnel file shall be maintained for the Clerk holding all key documents

7.2. The master copy of that file will be held by the PA to the HR Director at SMBC

7.3. A copy file will be held by the Chair of the Council

7.4. It is the Chair of the Council's personal responsibility to ensure that both files are regularly updated with all relevant paperwork such as appraisals, statement of terms and conditions etc.

8. Public Disclosure and transparency

8.1. The current Berkswell Clerk is committed to transparency. The salary for the Clerk and the key allowances are approved in public and recorded in the Council minutes.

8.2. The Clerk's annual appraisal is approved by full Council and is not a matter for public disclosure.
8.3. Approved – 17th July 2025