

Mike Eve suggested that the 'heritage' focus of the HC needs to be enhanced. He was prepared to source the finance necessary so that RTC could run the HC for another year.

114 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (1)(2), to exclude the public and press from item 115 on the grounds that it is likely to involve discussion about the terms that could be offered to prospective HC tenants – as well as the terms of employment of staff.

115 LETTING OF RYE HERITAGE CENTRE

To receive an update and, if necessary, to agree a course of action.

It was noted that the PCC would be considering whether it could accommodate the Model within St Mary's Church.

RESOLVED To thank the Group for its efforts thus far and assure it that the Council will consider seriously any proposal The Group submits (as well as any other proposals before the Council).

Clerk

The meeting ended at 7.46pm

Date Chairman

RYE TOWN COUNCIL

Restructuring Policy

Note *This policy replaces the Employment Stability policy*

1 Introduction

This policy sets out the Council's approach to managing restructures to ensure a consistent, transparent and fair approach is applied across the Council. The policy outlines the principles and steps required when undertaking restructures.

2 Policy aims

The aim of this policy is to provide clarity to managers and employees when the Council undertakes organisational restructuring to improve services and/or efficiency.

3 Consultation

At least 3 months prior to a proposed new structure being put into effect, the Town Clerk (or nominated representative) will consult stakeholders, including all affected employees and any recognised trades unions about any proposed restructuring process.

The consultation will include:

- The rationale for the change
- The identification of the group of employees affected (ring-fencing)
- The current and proposed revised structure
- Number of posts, grading/level of posts and post locations
- An outline of the intended content of the new posts
- The selection process that will apply to the ring-fenced staff
- The timetable to implement the new arrangements
- Any additional information relevant to the proposal

As part of the consultation process, consideration will be given, where practicable, to whether the application of voluntary redundancy/retirement would be appropriate in the circumstances, including whether voluntary retirement could be used to create 'bumped' opportunities (members of staff in comparable jobs, but outside of the ring fence, electing to retire early – thereby creating a potential redeployment opportunity).

Consultation will begin at the earliest opportunity and every effort will be made to produce all of the relevant information prior to consultation.

Following consultation, the Town Clerk (or nominated representative) will ensure that all employees affected by the proposal continue to have access to relevant documentation.

4 Population of the new structure

Prior to populating the new structure, all employees will receive an 'At Risk' letter detailing the selection process and relevant timescales.

A process of assigning and appointing employees into posts following a restructure will be used to ensure all employees are treated fairly and consistently. As a general principle, the highest-grade/level posts (if any) will be assigned/appointed to first.

The stages below shall be followed:

STAGE 1 – 'Slotting in' of employees

a) Comparable posts at the same level of responsibility/skill/qualification

(i) More posts than people

Where the overall purpose of a post in the new structure matches the employee's current post by at least 70% of the duties, the postholder will be advised that there is no change in their employment status and will be slotted into the post.

This is applicable when the number of posts equates to, or is greater than, the number of people.

(ii) Fewer posts than people

Where an employee's current post matches the new post by at least 70% of the duties, but there are more employees than posts available, all the employees will be ring-fenced to the posts and a competitive selection process (undertaken in accordance with the Council's normal recruitment and selection practices) will take into account:

- How closely the employee matches the new post's person specification.
- The degree to which the employee has the experience, motivation, skill and ability to achieve and maintain high standards of performance in the new role.
- Any conduct issues over the past 12 months.
- Attendance record over the last 12 months.
- Any performance issues over the last 12 months.

b) Comparable posts at a higher level of responsibility/skill/qualification

Where the comparable post is at a higher level than the individual's substantive role, a selection process (undertaken in accordance with the

Council's normal recruitment and selection practices) will take place to assess the suitability of the employee against the new post's job description and person specification.

If an individual does not demonstrate fully all the necessary skills for the higher level post during their selection process, a judgment will be made about whether the skills gap could be addressed by giving the employee a trial period of up to 3 months. If the skills gap is not addressed during the trial period the employee will not be offered the post.

c) Comparable posts at a lower level of responsibility/skill/qualification

Where the post has been graded at a lower level within the new structure the individual will be 'slotted' into the lower level post and their current level of remuneration will be protected, with no annual cost of living increases, for a period of 2 years – unless, within those 2 years, the salary of the new post exceeds that of the protected salary.

STAGE 2 – Employees not 'slotted in'

Following Stage 1, any posts remaining will be ring-fenced to employees affected by the restructure who were not 'slotted in' during Stage 1.

Posts will usually be ring-fenced to those employees whose existing post is most comparable. The posts remaining will be filled on a level by level basis, with the highest level posts being filled first.

Employees on fixed term contracts (with less than 12 months' service) should not be included in the ring-fence.

Employees remaining after Stage 1 will be notified of any unfilled posts and provided with the relevant job descriptions and person specifications. Employees will be asked to express an interest in remaining vacant posts within the new structure, in accordance with their grade/level and will be invited to participate in a competitive selection process (undertaken in accordance with the Council's normal recruitment and selection practices), provided they broadly meet the relevant person specification.

Once offered a post, the employee will be removed automatically from the ring-fence and will not be considered for any further posts. Individuals who decline to accept the offer of a suitable alternative post at the same level, rate of pay and broadly similar duties will be classed as redundant – and may not be entitled to redundancy pay.

5 Employees not at work or on secondment

Employees who are not at work – or are on secondment – during a restructuring process will be included in any consultation process and will receive the same information as their colleagues.

6 Following the conclusion of the restructuring process

Any employee without a post will be declared redundant.

7 Right of appeal

A member of staff can appeal against decisions that resulted in them being without a post and being declared redundant. This also applies to the range of circumstances around the redundancy. To appeal they should write to the Town Clerk within 5 working days of the written decision, stating their grounds for appeal. The Town Clerk will arrange for three members of the Personnel Committee* – who were not involved in the employee's redundancy selection - to hear the appeal and the procedure shall reflect the processes set out within the Grievance Procedure. The three Personnel Committee members can uphold the original outcome or decide it is not upheld. In these circumstances (redundancy dismissal) a further level of appeal will be allowed.

*If 3 eligible members of the Personnel Committee cannot be identified – or are not available – the quota shall be made up by appointing other Members of Council.

To appeal against the decision of the 3 members of the Personnel Committee, the staff member should write to the Town Clerk within 5 working days of receiving the written statement from their meeting, stating his/her grounds for appeal. The appeal shall be heard by the full Council and the procedure shall reflect the processes set out within the Grievance Procedure. The decision of the full Council shall be final and signify the end of the appeal process.

8 Redundancy pay

The Council uses the Government's Redundancy Pay Calculator for calculating the number of weeks' statutory entitlement for eligible* employees.

*Those who have worked for the Council for a minimum of 2 years continuously.

Where a financial saving can be demonstrated the Council may consider applying an enhancement factor to this redundancy payment.

Under certain circumstances the Council will consider allowing any redundancy or enhanced redundancy to be used to purchase years within the Council's pension scheme.

Adopted 11.11.19

RYE HERITAGE CENTRE - STATEMENT OF INTENT

1. For 3-4 years the Rye Heritage Centre (owned by Rye Town Council as a result of the gift of land, donations, grant funding, Council Tax and a loan), home of the Rye Town Model, has run with an excess of expenditure over income resulting in a significant subsidy from Rye Town Council funds.

2. Following a meeting of Rye Town Council on 28 October 2019 about the future of the Rye Heritage Centre, the Council made a statement :

“To protect the interests of local council tax payers and the council’s other services, as from April 2020 the visitor information service should be relocated to the town hall, the centre should be let and the town model should, if necessary, be placed into storage. However, should any members of the community express a desire to work up a proposal to keep the model at the centre, the council would be happy to provide support and guidance. Because a local charity has expressed interest in renting the centre for another purpose, any such proposal would need to be agreed with the council no later than 31 December.”

3. This sparked a social media campaign which generated widespread concern for the future of the Centre’s assets including the Rye Town Model. As a result, a meeting of citizens was called at the Heritage Centre on the evening of 4 November to consider the matter. Some 40 interested individuals attended from across Rye and beyond. Rye Town Council and many charities in Rye were represented. The meeting was chaired by Simon Parsons, who had initiated the social media campaign.

4. During the meeting, the importance of the Centre and its model was emphasised by many. Various future options were considered including (1) *Do nothing”; (2) “bolster the existing business model to better balance the account”; (3) adopt a revised business model. A record of the discussions will be available shortly.

5. At the end there was consensus for a Rye “group” to develop a proposal along the lines of Option 3, to present to Rye Town Council, in particular to:

- make a business case for leasing the whole of the Heritage Centre;
- propose a management structure with charitable status to take forward functions (to be agreed) of charitable purpose including the Town Model
- select 5/6 trustees with appropriate skills to oversee the work of the “group”
- consider a draft governing document for the “group”
- prepare an early bid for charitable status for a structure suited to the likely business: perhaps a CIO

6. This statement of intent will be followed by a detailed assessment by the “group” of the financial position and arrangements governing the Centre, its staff and assets. There will also be a consideration of the many ideas for fund raising and sponsorship raised at the meeting. Communication will continue on social media and in the local Press.

7. The “group” invites Rye Town Council to consider this “statement of intent” in relation to the Rye Heritage Centre and respond so that the next step can be planned.

Anthony Kimber PhD

Simon Parsons

Rye
5 November 2019