

**BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Minutes of the Confidential Finance & Staffing Committee**  
**held on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 11:00am held in the Council Chamber**

**DRAFT**  
Subject to confirmation

**PRESENT**

Cllr C Stevens – Committee Vice Chairman / Vice Chairman of Council	Cllr A Cross
Cllr H Miéville – Chairman of Council	Cllr R Holmes
Cllr S Chapman	Cllr T Clarkson
Cllr S Hitchings	
Cllr M Putt	

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Town Clerk

Cllr Stevens was Acting Chairman in Cllr L Hitchings' absence.

**60. APOLOGIES**

Cllr L Hitchings – Committee Chairman

**61. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL'S HR ADVISORS ON SHORTLISTING APPLICATIONS AND NOTE THE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

Prior to advertising the role in public, and assuming numerous suitable applications would be received, the Town Clerk enquired with the council's HR advisors if all candidates with CiLCA and relevant qualifications/experience had to be offered an interview. This is partly due to the time constraints of gathering staff and Councillors for two days for interviews. The HR advisors responded to say that no, not all suitably qualified and experienced individuals have to be offered an interview if numerous applications are received and there are others who can evidence more experience or relevance to the role. The committee was reminded of the nine protected characteristics (UK Equality Act 2010) when considering applications:

- **Age:** Protection against discrimination based on a person's age.
- **Disability:** Protection for people with physical or mental impairments.
- **Gender Reassignment:** Protection for people transitioning or who have transitioned gender.
- **Marriage and Civil Partnership:** Protection for those who are married or in a civil partnership.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity:** Protection for women who are pregnant or have recently given birth.
- **Race:** Protection based on colour, nationality, ethnic, or national origin.
- **Religion or Belief:** Protection for people with certain religions or philosophical beliefs.
- **Sex:** Protection for being male or female.
- **Sexual Orientation:** Protection for being gay, straight, bisexual, etc.

**Key Points:**

- Unlawful treatment can include direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- The Act also offers protection against discrimination by association, meaning you're protected if someone close to you has a protected characteristic.
- To create a fairer society and workplace, ensuring everyone has equal opportunities and is treated with dignity.

The Committee noted the report.

**62. TO REVIEW AND SHORTLIST THE APPLICATIONS FOR THE POSITION OF TOWN CLERK**

The Town Council confirmed that the Finance & Staffing committee would shortlist applications for the position of Town Clerk. Those candidates will then be invited by the Town Clerk to an interview, which will consist of a presentation to all staff and Councillors, and an interview carried out by the panel of Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and the Senior Councillor (in the Committee Chairman's absence).

The Committee approved the shortlisting document and agreed a minimum score of at least 40 'Essential' to be considered to be invited for an interview, with a maximum of six interviewees, before the process started.

The twelve applications were presented to the committee at Noon on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026 and shortlisting was carried out in conjunction with the Person Specification provided to all applicants. Since distribution, the Town Clerk noticed an error with the point for GPC coming under Essential instead of Desirable, which had been amended.

The committee reviewed all applications received, bearing in mind the importance that all personal data is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. Personal details of applicants are not being recorded or published in public minutes.

The Clerk was instructed to invite shortlisted candidates to interview and inform them of the process, scoring sheets, etc. with e-mails being sent to the candidates who were not shortlisted on this occasion.

**63. TO RECEIVE AND CONFIRM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW PANEL**

The questions were approved and will be printed for each candidate ready for the interviews on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026.

The form designed for the staff and Councillors who come along to the presentations was approved. The panel can then consider their feedback upon deliberating. This will be shared with the candidates in advance, so they can understand how the scoring process will work.

The committee confirmed the process and timings for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026 as per the table overleaf.

**64. TO CONFIRM DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO THE INTERVIEW PANEL TO RECOMMEND THE APPOINTMENT AT THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

As per the Planning meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026, with full council present, the committee delegated authority to the interview panel to recommend the appointment of the Town Clerk and Proper Officer to the council at the meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026. The agenda confirming the appointment of the Proper Officer to the council will be distributed on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2026 and the meeting will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at 7pm.

The meeting closed at 3:04 pm.

**SIGNED: .....**      **DATED: .....**

Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2026			Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2026			
Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3	Candidate 4	Candidate 5	Candidate 6	Deliberations and Decision
9:30am – Presentation	11:30am – Presentation	1:30pm – Presentation	9:30am – Presentation	11:30am – Presentation	1:30pm – Presentation	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> February 3:15pm – 5pm Panel to consider all the candidates and confirm its decision.
10:15am – Interview	12:15am – Interview	2:15pm – Interview	10:15am – Interview	10:15am – Interview	2:15pm – Interview	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> February / Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2026 Chairman of Council to contact the successful candidate.
						Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2026 Town Clerk/HR company to prepare the paperwork for the Chairman of Council.