

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 31 March 2011.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. R. Blunt CC

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC

Mr. G. Jones CC

Mrs. R. Page CC

Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

Mr. R. M. Wilson CC

116. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting on 2 December 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

117. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

118. Questions asked by members.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

119. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

120. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC declared an interest in the item on the Review of Delegated Powers to Heads of Department as a member of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (minute 31 refers).

121. Change to the Order of Business.

With the consent of the Committee, the Chairman agreed to vary the order of business from that set out in the agenda.

122. Sickness Absence - Third Quarter Performance.

The Committee considered a report of Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update on the Council's third quarter performance in respect of sickness absence. A copy of the report, marked "C", is filed with these minutes.

It was reported that the Council's sickness absence target was to achieve 6.5 days per full-time employee. However, the Council had at this stage achieved a sickness rate of 6.45 days.

Concern was expressed in relation to the high volume of absences for which the reasons were 'unknown'. It was hoped that, as the use of the Oracle system developed there would be greater detail provided in future datasets.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made in achieving the corporate sickness target for 2010/11 of 6.5 days per full-time employee be noted and welcomed.

123. Review of Terms and Conditions.

The Committee considered an oral update from the Director of Corporate Resources concerning a review of staff terms and conditions.

The Director reported that the Council was having to look critically at all areas of business in order to identify the significant efficiency savings that were required. As part of this work, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) had asked the Director to undertake a review of all aspects of staff terms and conditions, in consultation with representatives of the Trade unions.

Discussions were currently ongoing with CMT and it was hoped that it would be possible to submit detailed proposals to the Committee in the summer. It was acknowledged that this was an extremely difficult task which needed to be handled with great sensitivity.

RESOLVED:

That the efforts currently being made via the Council's Corporate Management Team to achieve substantial savings through changes to staff terms and conditions be noted.

124. Organisational Change Policy: Summary of Action Plans.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive regarding the summary of current Action Plans which contained provision for compulsory redundancy, and progress with their implementation. A copy of the report, marked "I", is filed with these minutes.

The Committee was advised that, in advance of the meeting, Mr. Wilson CC had submitted questions in relation to the action plans referred to in the appendix to the report, as follows:

Children and Young People's Service

1. Appendix A1 – Page 2 – Item 1 – Restructure of Planning and Commissioning. Where was the additional funding found from to allow the withdrawal of this action plan?
2. Appendix A2 – Page 2 – Item 4 – Youth Service Review Phase 1. Could I please be told the basis for the dispute and further details as to what is happening to resolve it, including details as to what the dispute is about would be helpful?
3. Appendix A2 – Page 2 – Item 3 – Adult Learning in the Community. Could I have more details of the impact please?

Director of Corporate Resources

4. Appendix A1 – Page 2 – Item 7 – Communications Review. Could I please be told how many posts now remain?
5. Appendix A2 – Page 4 – Item 3 – Restructure of the Change Management Unit (CMU). Could I have details of the next steps please?

Adults and Communities

6. Appendix A2 – Page 3 – Item 4 – Restructure of Leicestershire and Rutland Sports Partnership. What is the position with this Partnership following Michael Gove MP's recent announcement on additional funding? Does this effect this Partnership?

In response to Mr. Wilsons' questions, the following points were made:

1. The action plan had been temporarily withdrawn, arising from the Government's announcement of a £5 million Early Years and Early Intervention Fund.
2. Unite the Union had raised a dispute in relation to the Youth Service Review. In accordance with the Council's Dispute Policy and Procedure, a five member panel had been established to hear evidence from the union as to their grievance. The recommendations of the Panel would then be referred to the Chief Officer, the Employment Committee or the Cabinet, depending on the circumstances. It was planned that the Panel would meet early in April.
3. This matter would more properly be dealt with through the scrutiny process.
4. 34 posts remained within the new structure. 10 members of staff had been made redundant equating to a saving of £850,000. It was planned that further efficiency savings would be achieved through a further review in 2012/13.
5. It was hoped that the review of the CMU would create a more streamlined and efficient service. To this end, informal consultation had already commenced with staff with a view to reducing staffing levels from 39 to 12.

6. A written response would be provided to Mr. Wilson.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

125. Personal Development Review Completions - Update.

The Committee considered a report of Director of Corporate Resources concerning the number of Personal Development Reviews (PDRs) completed during 2010, arising from a request for a report on this matter at the Committee's meeting on 2 December. A copy of the report, marked "B", is filed with these minutes.

The Director reported that completions in the Adults and Communities Department were 'unknown' as until recently they had not followed the same process for recording PDR completion. The Department was now using the Oracle system for recording PDR completion, and it was therefore hoped that the completion rates for the Department, and that of the Environment and Transport, would now improve.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted and the continued positive approach being taken to ensure the completion of quality PDRs for all staff be fully supported;
- (b) That the Head of Strategic Human Resources be requested to take particular steps to ensure that the completion rate in the Adults and Communities and Environment and Transport Departments are improved.

126. Family Friendly Policies and Procedures.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning three "Family Friendly" policy and procedure documents. A copy of the report, marked "D", is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the following policy and procedure documents, as set out in the appendices to the report, be approved for immediate implementation:

- Maternity Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure;
- Adoption Leave and Pay Policy and Procedure;
- Maternity/Adoption Support Leave (incorporating Statutory Paternity Leave) Policy and Procedure.

127. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services - Update.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning progress made to date in relation to the review of Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services. A copy of the report, marked "E", is filed with these minutes.

The Director reported that the Review had given rise to two voluntary redundancies and one compulsory redundancy. Positive feedback had been received from Head Teachers on the way in which the Review had been conducted.

A suggestion was made that it might be helpful to organise training in Health, Safety and Wellbeing for elected members.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the completion of the review of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service be noted and that the launch of the new Service, and the extensive work required to ensure that it is robust and fit for purpose, be supported;
- (b) That the Head of Democratic Services be asked to explore the possibility of, and level of interest in, Health, Safety and Wellbeing training being provided for elected members.

128. Occupational Health - Update.

The Committee considered a report of Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update in respect of changes to the Council's Occupational Health Service. A copy of the report, marked "F", is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the awarding of a contract to Health Management to provide a joint Occupational Health service to the County, City and district/borough councils from June 2011 be noted.

129. Disturbance Policy and Procedure.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning a revision to the Council's Disturbance Policy and Procedure. A copy of the report, marked "G", is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Disturbance Policy and Procedure, set out in the appendix to the report, be approved for immediate implementation.

130. Outcome of Equalities Excellence Level Assessment.

The Committee considered an oral report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the outcome of the Council's recent Equalities Excellence Level Assessment.

The Director reported that the Assessment had highlighted that the Council was performing strongly in relation to leadership of, and commitment to, the equalities agenda. The Council's partnership working was also achieving positive outcomes for the people of Leicestershire.

The Assessment had also highlighted the following improvement areas:

- Effectiveness of recruitment panels;
- Lack of staff attendance at network conferences;
- Ensuring that managers fully understood the requirements of disabled people and their needs and were able to respond appropriately.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's achievement of an 'excellent' rating as part of the Equalities Framework for Local Government be noted and that congratulations be extended to all concerned.

131. Review of Delegated Powers to Heads of Departments.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning revisions to the delegated powers of the Director of Children and Young People's Service and the Director of Adults and Communities as part of a staged review of delegated powers to Heads of Departments. A copy of the report, marked "H", is filed with these minutes.

The Chief Executive reported that a phased review of delegated powers was being undertaken in order to provide for the removal, update or consolidation of delegated powers, as appropriate. Further reports covering other Departments would be submitted as necessary.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the delegated power in respect of the Premature Retirement Policy for Teachers, as outlined in 3 (i) of Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (b) That it be noted that the delegated power as outlined in 3 (ii) of Appendix 1 to the report is no longer required because under the Teachers' Pensions Regulations, teachers are now unable to retire voluntarily before the age of 55.