

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 18 October 2012.

PRESENT

(in the Chair)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC  
Mrs. J. Fox CC  
Mr. S. J. Hampson CC  
Mr. D. Jennings CC

Mr. P. C. Osborne CC  
Mrs. R. Page CC  
Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC  
Mr. R. M. Wilson CC

228. Election of Chairman.

It was moved, and seconded that “Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC be elected Chairman”.

It was moved, and seconded that “Mr. G. A. Boulter CC be elected Chairman”.

There being more than one nomination, a secret ballot was held in accordance with the provisions of the standing Orders 26 (4).

The Chief Executive reported that the ballot had resulted in Mr. Boulter receiving 3 votes and Mr. Rhodes receiving 4 votes. Accordingly, he declared Mr. Rhodes as having been elected.

Mr. J. B. Rhodes – in the Chair

229. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2012 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

230. Question Time.

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

231. Questions asked by members.

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

232. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

233. 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.

There were no declarations were made.

234. Staff Survey 2012 Action Plan.

The Committee considered a report and presentation of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the results of the Staff Survey 2012. A copy of the report, marked 'B', and the slides forming the presentation is filed with these minutes.

Members felt that it was inevitable that some of the pressures being felt within the Authority, particularly in relation to budget savings, would be reflected in the results of the Staff Survey 2012. However, they felt that the results gave particular cause for concern in respect of stress at work, work-life balance, bullying or harassment at work and the disappointing responses of disabled workers.

Reference was also made to the poor response rate generally, which had reduced from 38% in 2010 to only 27% in 2012. It was suggested that this raised questions about the extent to which staff felt that changes would result from the exercise.

The Committee was assured that the Council's Corporate Management Team was taking the findings of the Staff Survey very seriously. The People Strategy Board was looking in detail at the issues raised and how best to mitigate them, including engagement with Departmental Management Teams to ensure that messages were consistent and fed across the workforce. As part of these measures, a campaign was planned for staff under the branding "*You Said, We Did...*" which it was hoped would increase staff confidence in the value of future Staff Surveys.

Consultation had taken place with the trade unions.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the outcome of the Staff Survey 2012 as now reported, together with the comments now made by members as areas of concern, be noted;
- (b) That the Action Plan set out in Appendix A to the report be approved and that it be noted that steps are already underway to address the issues identified;
- (c) That a progress report on implementation of the Action Plan be submitted to the committee in Spring 2013.

235. Pension Auto-Enrolment.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources

concerning the impact of pension auto-enrolment and a proposed approach to implementation. A copy of the report, marked 'C', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the implementation of auto-enrolment to the relevant pension scheme be postponed from 1 February to 1 April 2013 on the basis set out in paragraph 13 of the report;
- (b) That auto-enrolment of those employees who have already opted out of the relevant pension scheme be deferred until 2017 on the basis set out in paragraph 14 of the report.

236. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Policy and Procedure.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources the Assessed and supported Year in Employment Policy and Procedure. A copy of the report, marked 'D', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Policy and Procedure be approved for immediate implementation.

237. Manager and Employee Guidance Notes on the Registration of Social Workers and Occupational Therapists.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the Manager and Employee Guidance notes on the Registration of Social workers and Occupational Therapists. A copy of the report, marked 'E', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the Manager and Employee Guidance Notes on the Registration of Social Workers and Occupational Therapists be approved for implementation.

238. Managing Attendance Update - Q1.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the performance of sickness absence levels across the Council for April to June 2012 (Q1). A copy of the report, marked 'F', is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that further work would be required on the part of managers to ensure that "return to work" interviews were carried out with staff who had been absent to ensure that more was understood about their reasons for the absence.

The Committee expressed a wish that further information be included in future reports in relation to long-term sickness absence.

RESOLVED:

That the performance of sickness absence levels across the Council for April to June 2012 (Q1) of 8.72 days per FTE be noted.

239. Domestic Violence Policy and Guidance.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning a new Domestic Violence Policy and Guidance. A copy of the report, marked 'G', is filed with these minutes.

It was reported that employers had increased responsibilities under the "Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004)" to ensure that support arrangements and information was available to those employees who were suffering domestic abuse. By maintaining confidentiality, managers would be required to build trust with the aim of encouraging those affected to make positive changes to reduce the level of risk to themselves and others.

The Committee felt that it was important to note that neither the County Council (as "employer") nor the support organisations listed in the Policy could act on a victim's behalf to ensure that perpetrators were held accountable for their actions.

RESOLVED:

That the Domestic Abuse Policy and Guidance be approved for implementation from 22 October 2012.

240. Substance Misuse Policy and Guidance.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning a new Substance Misuse Policy and Guidance. A copy of the report, marked 'H', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the Substance Misuse Policy and Guidance be approved for implementation from 22 October 2012.

241. Organisational Change Policy and Procedure: 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.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

242. Programme of Meetings in 2013.

The following schedule of meetings of the Employment Committee in 2013 was

AGREED:

Thursday 7 March  
Thursday 20 June  
Thursday 23 October  
Thursday 5 December

*(All meetings to start at 10.00am)*

243. Date of Next Meeting.

It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday 13 December at 10.00am.

10.00 am - 11.15 am  
18 October 2012

CHAIRMAN