

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 18 June 2015.

PRESENT

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC
Mrs. J. Fox CC
Mr. G. A. Hart CC
Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC

Mrs. H. E. Loydall CC
Mr. A. E. Pearson CC
Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC

1. Election of Chairman.

RESOLVED:

That Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC be appointed Chairman of the Employment Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2016.

2. Election of Deputy Chairman.

That Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC be elected Deputy Chairman of the Employment Committee for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2016.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2015.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2015 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported no questions under Standing Order 35.

5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

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

6. Urgent items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. 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.

No declarations were made.

8. Organisational Change Policy and Procedure: Update of Action Plans.

The Committee received an update of Organisational Change Policy and Procedure Action Plans. The report summarised the details of Action Plans with respect to the provision of compulsory redundancies and details of progress in their implementation. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the update on the Action Plans on Organisational Change Policy and Procedure be noted.

9. Behaviour in the Workplace Policy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources on Behaviour in the Workplace Policy, which sought the approval for the introduction of the Behaviour in the Workplace Policy to replace the Dignity at Work Policy. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Members welcomed the proposed policy and noted that the Trade Unions had been consulted, and were fully supportive of the proposed changes.

During the discussion a number of amendments were suggested and accepted by officers, and are reflected in the resolution of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Behaviour in the Workplace Policy be approved subject to the Policy being amended as follows:-

(i) Include cyber bullying in the list of unacceptable behaviour on page 13;

(ii) Redraft the third bullet point in the paragraph outlining managers' responsibilities, on page 15, to read as follows:

"Intervene immediately or as early as possible to put a stop to unacceptable behaviour."

(iii) Clarifying the section on support available to employees (page 17) to indicate that such support would be available to the alleged perpetrator and complainant.

(b) That twelve months after implementation of the Policy a report be submitted to the Committee advising on the impact.

10. Smarter Working Policy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources on Smarter Working Policy to be implemented within the Council. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions and concerns raised by members the Director of Corporate Resources advised as follows:-

- (a) Training and support would be provided for managers in operating and monitoring the new policy;
- (b) It was recognised that in some areas of work there needed to be flexibility in how the policy was implemented to meet business requirements;
- (c) The County Council had in place a lone working policy which would sit alongside this policy.

Members welcomed the new policy, as a starting point to improve working conditions and productivity, and that the policy was to supplement a number of other policies that were in place regarding conditions of service. The focus of the policy on outputs and results was particularly welcomed.

RESOLVED:

That the Smarter Working Policy be approved for implementation.

11. Sickness Absence Rates.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources on Sickness Absence. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the Council's overall position on sickness absence as of 31 March 2015. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions the Committee was advised as follows:-

- (a) The percentage of long term sickness was broadly on par with short term sickness absence;
- (b) The removal of category "Other" from Oracle sickness absence management system would not be an issue, as the new categories were broad and encompassed a comprehensive list of conditions;
- (c) Sickness absence at Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation (ESPO) was being analysed, and action plans would be discussed at the next ESPO management meeting.

Members were extremely concerned that the level of sickness absence continues to increase despite management efforts to address the problem. This was now a significant issue in terms of the number of working days lost, and members were of the view that it should be drawn to the attention of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the Sickness Absence Report be noted;

- (b) That the Chairman of the Committee be advised to draw the Chief Executive's attention to the reported rise in sickness absences and the comments of the Committee.

12. Changes to Officer Employment Procedure Rules.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which set out the amendment to the rules and procedures for the dismissal of Head of the Paid Service, the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Financial Officer. The aim of the report was to gain the Committee's approval to the proposed changes and to refer the matter to the Constitution Committee. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is attached with these minutes.

Members were advised that the concerns outlined in the report were being taken up with the Department for Communities and Local Government by the Local Government Association. The regulations required local authorities to implement the new procedures at the first meeting of the Authority after the Annual General Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed amendments to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules be approved and that the Constitution Committee and County Council be advised of the Committee's concern at difficulties likely to be encountered in implementing and applying the new procedures.

13. Date of Next Meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to take place on 22 October 2015 at 10.00am.

10.00 - 11.21 am
18 June 2015

CHAIRMAN