

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 30 June 2016.

PRESENT

Mrs. J. Fox CC  
Mr. S. J. Galton CC  
Mr. D. Jennings CC  
Mrs. H. E. Loydall CC

Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC  
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC  
Mr. E. D. Snartt CC

1. Appointment 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 2017.

(Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC - in the Chair)

2. Election of Deputy Chairman.

RESOLVED:

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 2017.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2016 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

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

5. Questions asked by members.

The Chief Executive reported that 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.

Mr. D. Jennings CC declared a personal interest in respect of the item entitled "Local Government Pension Scheme" (minute 13 refers) as Chairman of the Council's Local Pension Board.

8. Sickness Absence.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, which provided a year-end update on sickness absence for 2015-16. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 8" is filed with these minutes.

Members noted the additional information requested at the previous meeting of the Committee, which showed the breakdown by department of absences longer than six months, the Council's position against other comparable authorities on absence caused by viral infections and details of the Council's current flu vaccination programme.

In response to questions raised, members were advised as follows:-

- (i). The level of viral infections as a reason of absence was much greater at the Council than at other comparable authorities. However, it was noted that comparatively, the proportion of absence due to stress, depression and mental health was low, leading to questions about what people chose to report;
- (ii). Absences over seven days required a doctor's certificate to be submitted to a manager, though it was noted that viral infections were likely to be largely self-diagnosed and resulted in a short period of absence in most cases;
- (iii). The process of returning to work after a "long term" absence (classed as four weeks or more) included considering the involvement of Occupational Health, having a review meeting with the manager, and potentially actioning a support plan. This process was currently under review;
- (iv). The "myth busting communications plan" (as referred to on page 11) was a campaign aimed at making the Attendance Management policy and procedures clearer for staff and managers and tackling misconceptions.

Members noted the reduction in overall rate of days lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) by 0.51 days and welcomed the actions being taken to decrease it further. However concern remained about the cost of absence to the Authority at a time of significant pressure on the Council's finances. Particular concern was drawn to the comparatively high absence rates of both the Adults and Communities Department and Children and Family Services.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the reduction of sickness absence by 0.51 days per FTE at the end of 2015-16 and the work towards achieving the corporate target of 7.5 days per FTE be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that the corporate sickness absence rate, particularly that for the Adults and Communities Department and Children and Family Services would be drawn to the attention of the Chief Executive with a view of establishing an effective way forward on this issue.

9. Lone Working and Personal Safety Campaign.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources, which provided information and sought its views on the work undertaken by Health, Safety and Wellbeing Services to improve personal safety of staff whilst working alone. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 9" is filed with these minutes.

In response to the Committee's suggestion, the Policy would be amended to include guidance on the impact of mental health on lone working.

RESOLVED:

That the rollout of the Lone Working and Personal Safety campaign be supported.

10. Staff Survey, Values and Behaviours and the Employment Deal.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided a summary of the outcomes and actions identified in the 2015 Staff Survey. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 10" is filed with these minutes.

The Committee welcomed the increase in response rate though concern remained that 59% of staff did not participate in the Survey.

In response to questions raised, members were advised as follows:-

- (i). The low PDR completion rate was probably more reflective of a lack of recording of completed PDRs via the Oracle system. A review was being undertaken to improve the PDR process and ensure it was a valuable exercise for staff;
- (ii). That a full breakdown of Staff Survey data, including completion by department was made available to managers.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed actions arising from the Staff Survey as outlined in the report be supported.

11. Pay Award 2016-18.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which outlined the action taken by the Chief Executive to implement a pay award for all employees on Grades 2 -17 in line with the National Joint Council pay award for 2016 – 18, and sought its approval to implement the Joint Negotiating Committee pay award for the same period for Chief Officers and the Chief Executive. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 11" is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the urgent action taken by the Chief Executive in respect of the implementation of the National Joint Council Pay Award for employees on grades 2 –17 for 2016 – 18 be noted;

- (b) That the implementation of the Joint Negotiating Committee Pay Award for employees on grades 18 – 21 and the pay award for the Chief Executive for 2016 – 18 be approved.

## 12. Public Sector Exit Payments.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which informed members of the Government's proposals to place a cap on exit payments for public sector employees, and to introduce a repayment requirement where senior employees returning to any part of the public sector within 12 months of receiving such payment. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 12" is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions raised, members were advised as follows:-

- (i). The early analysis of the likely impact of the Policy would be on employees aged 55 years and over earning over £50,000, who faced redundancy and were able to access their pension. It was likely that the Policy could also affect lower-earning employees with a considerable length of service;
- (ii). It was envisaged that the repayment requirement would be enforceable under statute, which in extreme cases could lead to prosecution to recover the monies owed to the Authority.

Mrs. H. Loydall CC asked that it be recorded that she was disappointed that the legislative requirements on exit payments were being forced on the Council by the Government without any clarity from the Treasury as to how a power to "waiver" the payments would be implemented. The Director indicated a further report would be presented to the Committee when this information was available.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That a report containing further detail regarding the implementation of a waiver arrangement and any impact on the Council's Pay Policy Statement be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

## 13. Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which sought its agreement to the policies where the County Council, as a scheme employer, could exercise discretion under the provision of the Local Government Pension Scheme. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 13" is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the changes to the discretionary elements of Local Government Pension Scheme as set out in paragraphs 7 to 9 of the report be approved;
- (b) That it be noted that the discretion relating to the Exit Payment Regulations was provisional until the Enterprise Act 2016 comes into force later in 2016.

14. Organisational Change Policy and Procedure. Summary of Action Plans.

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented a summary of current Action Plans which contained provision for compulsory redundancies and details of progress in their implementation. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 14' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

15. Date of Next Meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 20 October 2016.

10.00 - 11.25 am  
30 June 2016

CHAIRMAN