



Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 21 October 2014.

PRESENT

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

Mrs. J. Fox CC

Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

Mr. D. Jennings CC

Mr. G. Welsh CC

Mrs. H. E. Loydall CC

16. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2014 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

17. Question Time.

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

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

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

19. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

20. 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 such declarations were made.

21. People Strategy 2014 - 17.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which sought the Committee's approval of the draft People Strategy which covered the period 2014 to 2017. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 7' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i) Whilst welcoming the Strategy, members commented that there were significant changes now taking place as a result of, amongst other things, the Transformation Programme. Given this, it would seem appropriate for the Strategy to be reviewed after two years to ensure that it remained relevant;
- (ii) It was suggested that the County Council should aspire to have a more customer focused approach to providing services and be more responsive where issues arose. It was recognised that as a public sector organisation, with a number of statutory

duties and responsibilities to uphold, the County Council would not be able to operate as a commercial organisation. However, the County Council could seek to implement a measured approach, utilising available resources, to adapt to become a more customer focused service delivery organisation;

- (iii) The Strategy focused on the County Council's workforce but was designed to have regard to other services and strategies such as ICT, Customer Services, and the Community Strategy and this would be communicated to all employees;
- (iv) UNISON and other recognised Trade Unions had been consulted on the Strategy and would be kept informed of any future plans and updates in relation to transformation.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the People Strategy 2014 – 17 be approved as an interim document to be further developed in line with the transformation programme and be reconsidered by the Committee at the appropriate juncture;
- b) That the objectives of the Strategy, to be delivered through a detailed action plan, be noted.

22. Pay Award 2014.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which provided an update on the 2014 national pay negotiations affecting Leicestershire County Council employees employed under the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Employees. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 8' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i) The strike action originally planned to take place on 14 October had been withdrawn due to a revised offer from the NJC of 2.2%, effective from 1 January 2015, which was currently being considered by the Trade Unions. No further strikes were currently planned;
- (ii) Financial implications for the County Council of the revised pay offer from 1% to 2.2% were currently being calculated, however, it was expected that the revised pay offer would be affordable due to the proposed offer being planned for implementation over a 15 month period.

RESOLVED:

That the Pay Award 2014 report be noted.

23. Report on Sickness Absence.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Directors of Corporate Resources and Public Health which outlined the further work that had been undertaken on the County Council's approach to management of sickness. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 9' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i) Members welcomed the County Council's proactive approach to addressing sickness levels, noting that sickness performance for June 2014/15 Q1 had shown improvement over previous figures. The Adults and Communities Department had consistently experienced the highest sickness levels and, as explained to the Committee previously, care staff accounted for the large majority of absences within the Adults and Communities Department. This could be attributed to the nature of the role;
- (ii) It was suggested that there might be a correlation between mental health and short term sickness absences and this would be looked at to obtain a better understanding. A mental health first aid training course for managers had been established and this had resulted in improvements in staff wellbeing. The district councils had been advised of the County Council's mental health first aid training course and it was hoped that they would implement similar arrangements. The importance of mental health training and the positive effect that this could have on sickness levels was recognised by the Committee;
- (iii) The County Council had experienced a relatively low level of sickness absence due to flu. Currently, all front line social care and health staff received flu vaccinations. Members suggested that consideration be given to rolling this policy out to all County Council employees;
- (iv) There was a need to identify trends in sickness absence and include details of long term and short term absences to gain a better understanding of sickness levels with a view to reducing them. It was explained that a new sickness reporting system was to be introduced which would allow for sickness levels to be broken down and monitored.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report on sickness absence be noted;
- b) That the commitment from officers to maintain a focus on managing attendance, ensuring managers at all levels proactively address sickness absence be noted;
- c) That the proposed use of the Public Health England Workplace Wellbeing Charter National Award for England - Self Assessment Standards to identify good practice and gaps in the Council's approach to the health, safety and wellbeing of employees and the actions required to implement these standards, be supported;
- d) That the identification of workplace champions for mental health from across the organisation be supported;
- e) That the County Council be asked to make a public commitment to taking action on employee health and wellbeing by signing up to the Public Health Responsibility Deal and sharing progress on an annual basis with other signatories.

24. Organisational Change Policy: 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 redundancy and details of progress in their implementation. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

It was noted that the role of the Employment Committee in looking at Action Plans was to ensure that they complied with the County Council's Employment Policy and Procedure.

RESOLVED:

That the summary of current action plans which contain provision for compulsory redundancy and details of progress in their implementation be noted.

25. Date of Next Meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday 4 December at 10.00am.

10.00 - 11.10 am  
21 October 2014

CHAIRMAN