

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Thursday, 8 December 2011.

PRESENT

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

Mr. R. Blunt CC

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC

Mr. G. Jones CC

Mr. J. Miah CC

Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

Mr. E. D. Snartt CC

185. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2011 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

186. Question Time.

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

187. Questions asked by members.

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

188. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

189. 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. E. D. Snartt CC and Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC each declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 7 as Mr. Snartt's daughter was a teacher and part of the Teachers' Pension Scheme and Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC was also part of the Scheme as a former teacher (Minute 191 refers).

190. Staff Terms and Conditions - Update.

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

The Committee was advised that, since the last meeting, the consultation had been extended as agreed and this had included reference to parking charges

at Council sites and changes to overtime payments. Members were reminded that both these issues had been suggested by staff themselves in response to the consultation as possible alternatives to some of the proposals put forward.

In response to questions from members, the estimated costs and savings included in the various proposals were reported and the Committee was reminded that the Medium Term Financial Strategy required the making of savings of at least £2 million on the review of terms and conditions.

The Assistant Director of Corporate Resources (People and Transformation) went on to indicate his understanding of what was likely to be acceptable to the trade unions and what he believed were the major obstacles to achieving a collective agreement. He remained optimistic that such an agreement could be reached.

Members were advised that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee setting out the outcome of the negotiations and seeking agreement to the final proposals.

RESOLVED:

That the update in respect of the review of staff terms and conditions be noted.

191. Consultation on Possible Changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the Authority's proposed response to a consultation being run by the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) in respect of proposed increases to employee contribution rates and changes to scheme accrual rates, effective from 1 April 2012. A copy of the report, marked 'B' and appended consultation response is filed with these minutes.

Members expressed support for the Director's response to the consultation, which outlined a number of concerns in relation to short term changes to the Scheme which were likely to be fundamentally amended when the revised Scheme was launched in 2015.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed response to the CLG consultation, as appended to the report, be approved.

192. Managing Attendance - Q2 Performance.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update on the overall County Council and departmental performance in relation to sickness absence for the period 1 July to 30 September 2011 (Q2). A copy of the report, marked 'C', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from debate, the following points were noted:

- The Council's sickness rate was currently 6.33 days per FTE – well within the target figure of 7.5 days for 2011/12. It was noted that the Council's performance in this area was such that it was now one of very few authorities to be ahead of the private sector absence rate of 7 days;
- Recording of absences where a reason had not been given had fell significantly. This was expected to improve further in 2012 as it was intended to have the Oracle self-service system implemented in schools by August;
- There had been a significant rise in stress/depression being given as a reason for absence. Managers were being encouraged to work closely with staff on this issue. It was reported that the Authority's counselling service had been strengthened in order to respond to the increased demand.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's performance in respect of sickness absence levels across the Council for the period July to September 2011 (Q2) of 6.33 days per FTE including schools and 7.37 days per FTE excluding schools be noted.

193. 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 'D', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

11.00 am - 11.30 am
08 December 2011

CHAIRMAN