

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee held at County Hall, Glenfield on Tuesday, 28 February 2012.

PRESENT

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

Mr. R. Blunt CC

Mrs. R. Page CC

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC

Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

Mr. G. Jones CC

201. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2012 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

202. Question Time.

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

203. Questions asked by members.

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

204. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

205. 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.

206. Change to the Order of Business.

The Chairman sought and obtained the consent of the Committee to vary the order of business from that set out in the agenda.

207. Local Government Pension Scheme - Discretions.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the policies adopted by the County Council in respect of discretions afforded under the provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations. A copy of the report, marked 'G', is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Corporate Resources reported that exceptional circumstances relating to requests for early retirement where capital costs were applicable were subject to a robust business case. Where capital costs could not be justified, requests would be denied.

It was noted that a report on Pension Scheme Discretions would be submitted to the Committee every three years as a matter of course, in accordance with the Pensions regulations.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed change in policy relating to Regulation 30, as set out in paragraph 5 of the report, be approved and that the Director of Corporate Resources be given delegated power to apply the same policy in respect of former scheme employers.

208. Staff Terms and Conditions.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the conclusion of the review of staff terms and conditions. A copy of the report and proposed changes, marked B', is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Corporate Resources was pleased to report that the Council had reached a collective agreement with the recognised trade unions. The agreement was the culmination of a long and extensive process of engagement with members and staff. Similar exercises at nearby Councils had led to campaigns on behalf of staff against the proposals, so with that in mind, it was particularly pleasing that Leicestershire staff had responded in a constructive manner.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the list of changes to staff terms and conditions, as appended to the report, be approved for implementation from 1 April 2012;
- (b) That the Committee places on record its appreciation and thanks to:-
 - (i) the Assistant Director of Corporate Resources (People and Transformation) and his staff for their work towards achieving a successful conclusion to this matter; and
 - (ii) the Council's staff and their representatives for their willingness to accept revised terms and conditions as an important contribution towards the financial savings the County Council is now required to make.

209. Flexible Working Policy.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources outlining a revised Flexible Working Policy, arising from the review of staff terms and conditions. A copy of the report, marked 'C', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the Flexible Working Policy, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved for implementation from 1 May 2012.

210. Sickness Absence - Q3 Update.

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 October 2011 to 31 December 2011 (Q3). A copy of the report, marked 'D', is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Corporate Resources reported that, in future, the report would exclude absence data for schools due to their transfer from local authority control to academy status. From September, a new module within the Oracle Self Service system would be implemented which would require a reason to be given for absence. This was expected to eliminate 'unknown' absences.

Though the absence figure for the Adults and Communities department for the period October to December 2011 appeared high (10.24 days) when compared to other departments, it actually compared very favourably with the equivalent figures of other authorities. It was noted that the environment in which staff in this department worked was both physically and mentally stressful and this had impacted on sickness absence levels. It was expected that this absence level may fall when elderly person's homes transferred from Council control to private companies.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council's performance on sickness absence levels for October to December 2011 be noted;
- (b) That the proposed target of 7.5 days per employee for 2012/13 be noted.

211. Update on Performance Development Review (PDR) Completion - 2010/11.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update on departmental PDR completion for 2010/11. A copy of the report, marked 'E', is filed with these minutes.

The Committee was disappointed to learn of the poor completion rate of PDRs for the Environment and Transport department (53%) and noted the urgent need to improve this figure.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That the attention of the Corporate Management Team be drawn to the Committee's concerns about the inconsistent rate of completion of Personal Development Reviews and, particularly, the poor completion rate of the Environment and Transport Department.

212. Pay Policy Statement.

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the Council's Pay Policy Statement, which was required to be agreed by the full County Council under the new Localism Act. A copy of the report, marked 'F', is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Corporate Resources reported that the report needed to be revised to show the median salary of the Council's workforce (12.11 or 12.17 including ESPO), rather than the mean salary, as indicated on the first page of the report. This change would be reflected in the report to the County Council meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Pay Policy Statement as now amended be approved for submission to the County Council meeting on 21 March 2012.

213. 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 'H', is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.