

Cherwell District Council

Personnel Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 3 September 2009 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Victoria Irvine (Chairman)

Councillor Chris Smithson
Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart
Councillor Douglas Williamson
Councillor Barry Wood

Substitute

Members: Councillor Michael Gibbard (In place of Councillor Rose Stratford)
Councillor Alastair Milne Home (In place of Councillor Lawrie Stratford)

Apologies
for
absence: Councillor Rick Atkinson
Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Russell Hurle
Councillor G A Reynolds

Officers: Mary Harpley, Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service
AnneMarie Scott, Head of Human Resources
Alexa Coates, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Natasha Clark, Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

16 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

17 **Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting**

There were no petitions or requests to address the meeting.

18 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

19 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20 **Safeguarding Children and Young People**

The committee considered a report of the Head of Recreation and Health and the Head of Human Resources which sought approval for the Council's new Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Procedures and Self Assessment Action Plan.

The committee discussed training levels and delivery and were advised that Level A was the most basic level of training available organisational wide. It was planned to train trainers in order to deliver Level A training in-house.

Resolved

That the Council's new Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy, Procedure and Self Assessment Action Plan is approved.

21 **Staff Survey 2010**

The committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources updating the committee on progress since the last staff survey and plans for the next survey in January 2010.

The committee discussed the possibility of conducting an interim survey internally in the years in between the MORI survey. Officers offered to investigate this and advised members that there had been concerns relating to confidentiality amongst staff when the survey was first introduced. Commissioning MORI to administer the survey had brought credibility to the process particularly in terms of guaranteeing confidentiality.

Officers advised the committee that the staff survey was part of a wider staff consultation process. An action plan was agreed following the 2008 survey and staff were involved in any policy changes which followed the survey. Members discussed survey participation levels and suggested that involvement be further incentivised in order to increase participation.

Members commented on the value of regularly undertaking an independent staff survey which allowed Members to make informed management decisions regarding personnel developments.

Members requested that Officers circulate a copy of the finalised version of the survey to members of the committee.

Resolved

- 1) That the plans for the 2010 staff survey are noted
- 2) That the process which has been made against the action plan arising from the 2008 survey is noted.

22 **Employment Statistics Quarter 1 - 2009/2010**

The committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources detailing employment statistics by Directorate for information and monitoring purposes.

The committee discussed the reasons for the low level of leavers in Quarter One. Officers explained that they felt this could be explained by the economic downturn and the feeling of uncertainty this created when staff considered moving elsewhere.

Resolved

That the contents of the report are noted.

23 **Workforce Planning**

The committee considered a report of the Chief Executive and Head of Human Resources updating Members on the progress around workforce planning which aimed to ensure the Council had sufficient skills and capacity for future needs.

The committee were informed that a further meeting may be required in November to consider any restructure plans. Officers explained that staff affected by outsourcing were being offered as many alternate opportunities as possible either within the Council or businesses in the area. The Council had also recently entered into an agreement with the County Council which gave Cherwell staff early sight of opportunities at the County. The Council was also providing support and training opportunities to affected members of staff such as CV and application advice and training on interview techniques.

The committee also discussed the impact of the North West Bicester eco-development and were advised that the arrangements for a designated North West Bicester team were being developed by the North West Bicester Project Board.

Resolved

- 1) That the contents of the report is endorsed by the committee
- 2) That a meeting of the committee in November is arranged to consider the outcome of expressions of interest following the Planning for the Future letter and potential restructures.

24 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 4 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

25 **Corporate Debt Recovery**

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director Customer Service and Resources and the Head of Finance setting out a proposal to form a single debt collection function.

Resolved

That the formation of a single corporate debt collection, and the proposed job descriptions and grades, be approved.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: