

Cherwell District Council

Personnel and General Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel and General Committee held in at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 10 December 2008 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart (Chairman)

Councillor Rose Stratford
Councillor Norman Bolster
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE
Councillor Russell Hurle
Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Councillor Barry Wood

Apologies for absence: Councillor Ken Atack
Councillor G A Reynolds
Councillor Chris Smithson

Officers: AnneMarie Scott, Head of Human Resources
Sarah McCluskey, HR Manager
Grahame Helm, Head of Safer Communities & Community Development
Alexa Coates, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

38 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

39 Petitions and Requests to Address the Meeting

There were none.

40 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

41 Minutes

The Committee discussed the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2008 and were updated on minute No.PG28 Service Head Recruitment – Finance and minute No.PG26 Council Offices Opening Hours and Flexible Working Hours. In relation to minute No.PG28 members of the committee were advised that the recruitment of the Head of Finance had been suspended as a suitable candidate had not been identified.

In relation to minute No.PG26 members of the Committee were advised that late opening of Bodicote House offices was not required at this time. It was planned to continue to open the area offices late (no later than 10am) once a week in order for

Customer Service staff to access training and communications from the main Council offices at Bodicote House.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 September 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42 Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources inviting comments on the Department for Communities and Local Government consultation paper on changes to the code of conduct. The Committee considered the proposal to introduce a mandatory code of conduct for local authority employees.

Members of the Committee discussed how a code of conduct for employees would relate to current contracts and terms of conditions of employment. The Head of Human Resources advised the Committee that the conduct of employees is adequately covered by contracts of employment and that a mandatory code of conduct was not required. The Committee particularly noted the response to Question 13 and whether a code of conduct was required, the Committee supported the answer that it was not required.

Resolved

That the report and response to the consultation paper be noted.

43 Employment Statistics Qtr 2, 2008-9

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources setting out details of staff employment numbers for information and monitoring purposes for the period July to September 2008.

The Committee expressed their thanks to officers for supplying statistical data and identified that a report showing 18 months of data would be useful to view trends for the year.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

44 Pensions Policy Statements

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources seeking approval of new discretions under Local Government Pensions Scheme regulations in order to update the Pensions Policy Statements.

Resolved

(1) That the use of Regulation 13 – the discretion to award additional pension up to £5000 be agreed using the same criteria as already agreed for awarding additional pensionable membership (up to 10 years) to ensure a consistent approach.

(2) That the updated Pension Policy Statements be approved.

45 Revised Sickness Absence Policy

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources which sought approval for a revised Sickness Absence Policy. The Committee were advised that

the Council performed well in this area and had relatively low levels of absence due to sickness. Levels had worsened slightly in the last year and it was hoped the revised policy would reduce the level of sickness absence taken by members of staff.

The Committee were advised that the revised sickness and absence policy set out more robust monitoring and action against sickness absence. Line Managers were undertaking training in order to conduct 'return to work' interviews. The revised policy gave a greater emphasis to supporting staff who were absent from work and identifying any issues which prevented staff from attending work.

Resolved

- (1) That the revised sickness absence policy, including ill health retirement process, be approved for implementation in April 2009.
- (2) That comparative figures on sickness absence levels in other local authorities be provided at the next meeting.

46

Capability Policy

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources seeking approval of a Capability Policy which was developed to address situations where employees were not meeting required standards of performance in their jobs. The Committee were advised that the performance of staff against specific targets was reviewed through appraisals. The capability policy provided managers with a mechanism of dealing with capability issues identified in staff appraisals.

The Committee were advised that the new policy provided a distinction between capability and disciplinary issues. Where disciplinary issues are usually addressed through the imposition of certain sanctions against members of staff the capability issues would be addressed through training and support. Which it was hoped would help members of staff who were underperforming meet the desired requirements of their job.

Resolved

That the capability policy be approved from implementation from 1 January 2009.

47

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 item(s) of business, on the grounds that they could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 4 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

EXEMPT

48 **REVIEW OF PUBLIC PROTECTION TEAM STRUCTURE**

The Committee considered an exempt report of the Head of Safer Communities and Community Development to review the public protection team structure.

Resolved

That the following be approved:

- (1) The new structure for the Public Protection team
- (2) the promotion of the existing Technical Assistant to a new Technical Officer post at Local Grade 14 with effect from 1 April 2009 and subject to the award of the Higher Certificate in Food Hygiene Inspection
- (3) the creation of a new post of Technical Assistant at Local Grade 8 following promotion of the existing postholder
- (4) the re-designation of the existing Environmental Health Practitioner post to Environmental Health Officer at Local Grade 16/17 following qualification (Environmental Health Officers Registration Board Certificate) of the existing postholder (post no. CC0058) with progression to LG17 subject to one year's satisfactory post-qualification experience
- (5) the replacement of the Environmental Health Officer (Job Share) post to that of Environmental Health Officer (Part-Time) on 14.8 hours per week, thereby deleting post no. CC0052
- (6) the deletion from establishment of the post of Business Support Officer (post no. CC0057)

49 **REDUNDANCY OF POST (EX0070) EXCHEQUER**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources relating to the redundancy of Post No. (EX0070)

Resolved

- (1) The redundancy of post EX0070 on 31 March 2009 be approved.
- (2) The payment of redundancy and PRP be approved

The meeting ended at 7.37 pm

Chairman:

Date: