

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2012 AT CH - ORKNEY ROOM, EAST WING - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Rod Eaton, Cllr Mike Hewitt (Vice Chairman), Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Francis Morland, Cllr Bill Moss (Substitute), Cllr John Noeken and Cllr John Smale

67 Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Jane Scott, who was substituted by Cllr Bill Moss.

68 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 5 September 2012, subject to the following amendment:-

Minute No 64 – Travel and Mileage Allowances Policy

Fourth paragraph, first sentence be amended to read:-

“Some concern was expressed *by Cllr Rod Eaton* at the proposal to permit cyclists to claim 40p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and the likely cost involved.”

69 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

70 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reminded Members that, at its meeting on 28 July 2010, this Committee approved a revised Trade Union Recognition and Facilities

Agreement on the proviso that it be reviewed after a period of time. Accordingly, an update report was duly presented to this Committee at its meeting on 23 November 2011 which proposed two amendments to the Agreements, both of which were agreed. At that meeting it was also requested that a further update be given in 12 months' time, i.e. in November 2012.

However, there were no proposed amendments to the current agreement and in these circumstances the Chairman had confirmed that the same arrangements would remain in place for a further 12 months with an update scheduled to be brought back to this Committee in November 2013.

71 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present or councillors' questions.

72 **CRB Policy**

The Committee received a report by the Service Director HR & OD on the revised CRB Policy consequent upon the implementation of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012. The report outlined future changes which would impact on this policy over the next few months.

During discussion attention was drawn to the role of the CRB team and the need to ensure that CRB checks were carried out when necessary. The CRB team would also continue to work with the Criminal Records Bureau as a safeguard and the team would also offer the necessary advice and assistance to managers when necessary.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) **To approve the amended Criminal Records Disclosures Policy and procedure.**
- (2) **To delegate authority to the Service Director, HR & OD to approve the future changes to the Policy in December 2012 and March 2013 required due to legislative changes arising from the implementation of the Protection of Freedoms Act, after consultation with the Chairman.**

73 **Update on Equality and Diversity**

The Committee considered a report by the Service Director HR & OD which provided an update regarding the actions Wiltshire Council was taking to meet its requirements under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

A concern was noted that, despite a number of communications through both Managers' Wire and Electric Wire asking staff to update their details on SAP, there was still a high percentage of "unknown" data with regards to both ethnicity and disability.

It was acknowledged that staff needed to be acquainted with the benefits that would be result from the provision of this data, which could be sensitive, and that these requests came as a result of a requirement from Central Government. There was also a need to ensure that staff felt safe in disclosing any sensitive personal data.

The Committee noted that the HR People Strategy 2012-2015 had been launched in October 2012 and that this strategy worked alongside the Business Plan and supported the Behaviours Framework. It was underpinned by an equality and inclusion ethos which would help to ensure that the Council met its obligations under the equality duty and actively demonstrated a commitment to deliver equality and inclusion outcomes.

In answer to a question, Members were informed that a Personal Care Room had been provided on the ground floor of New County Hall, where certain procedures such as bandage changes and injections could take place. Discussions were being held with the Public Health Department as to how this room could be fully utilised, the outcome of which would be reported to the Disabilities Forum. Members requested to be kept informed of developments.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report.**
- (2) To note that an Equalities Networking Lunch event was being planned for early 2013 and to request:-**
 - (a) that invitations to this Lunch be sent to all Councillors, especially to all members of this Committee.**
 - (b) that if possible arrangements be made for the Equalities Networking Lunch to be held on a date when this Committee was due to meet.**
- (3) To request that details of the full use of the Personal Care Room, situated on the ground floor of New County Hall be reported back to this Committee in due course.**

74 **Quarterly Workforce Reports**

The Committee received a quarterly workforce report, excluding fire, police and schools staff, and also casual employees and agency/professional services staff unless stated, for the quarter ended 30 September 2012 concerning:-

- Staffing Levels
- Sickness Absence
- New Health and Safety RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) Related Injuries
- New Disciplinary and Grievance Cases
- Voluntary Staff Turnover

It was noted that although there had been no change in sickness absences since the last quarter, stress/depression/mental health/fatigue continued to account for the highest proportion of sickness days lost at 21.8% of all absences. Various initiatives such as the ability to work from home and the provision of break out and quiet areas in New County Hall would hopefully assist in reducing stress but ongoing discussions were taking place with officers from Occupational Health to explore possible ways of further reducing this level of sickness.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

75 **Future Meetings**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was due to be held on Wednesday 9 January 2013 in the Pratchett Room, New County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

76 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.40 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713035, e-mail roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk

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