

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 JANUARY 2016 IN THE KENNET COMMITTEE ROOM, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chair), Cllr John Smale (Vice Chairman), Cllr David Pollitt, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Tony Trotman (Substitute), Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Stuart Wheeler and Cllr Bob Jones MBE

Also Present:

Cllr Bill Moss

1 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE (who was substituted by Cllr Tony Trotman) and Cllr Graham Wright.

2 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 November 2015.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

5 **Public Participation**

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

6 **Security Vetting Policy**

Consideration was given to a report by the Associate Director, People & Business which sought approval for the new Security Vetting Policy.

It was explained that security vetting applied when specialised security checks were required for certain specified roles that included access to particularly sensitive or secure data.

As Wiltshire Council now worked in partnership with Wiltshire Police, some employees working in roles that worked closely with them required non police personnel vetting (NPPV) to reduce the risks of unauthorised disclosure or loss of sensitive police information.

A baseline personnel security standard (BPSS) check might be required if an employee had access to certain sensitive information via the public services network (PSN) in the course of their employment with the Council.

It was noted that there were no costs associated with NPPV checks as they were carried out by the police. However, there was a cost associated with obtaining a BPSS check which was £33.16 per individual. There would be a number of checks required in 2016 and work was currently underway to identify the individuals needing the checks.

Members were informed that the policy had been approved and ratified by the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) on 7 December 2015 following consultation with facilities, management, HR, the legal team, union representatives and other stakeholders.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

To approve the Security Vetting Policy.

7 Smoke-free Policy

The Committee received a report by the Associate Director, People and Business which presented a new Smoke-free Policy and Procedure. The new policy outlined the move to a smoke-free working environment in order to provide a healthy workplace for employees, which would include the removal of designated smoking areas on site and requiring staff to move off site. The policy also removes smoking breaks.

Members were reminded that the Committee gave some initial consideration to suggested planned revisions to this Policy at its last meeting but, whilst supporting in principle the development of a new smoke-free policy, expressed some concerns about the practicality of implementing and enforcing the policy, especially on shared sites with partners.

It was explained that the current policy provided designated smoking areas and cigarette bins at each of the main hubs and depots. It also allowed managers to use their discretion when permitting smoking breaks outside of the lunch period, provided that the time was made up.

The Public Health team had expressed concerns about allowing Council staff and members of the public to smoke on site considering the Council's policy to promote healthy living both across Wiltshire and within the workforce and aspiration to attain the "Healthy Workplace Charter". As a consequence, the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) had agreed to implement smoke-free sites across Wiltshire Council sites on 24 August 2014.

The new policy would provide for a three month lead in time to ensure arrangements were in place and to provide sufficient time for staff wishing to stop smoking to gain support.

During the ensuing discussion, Members once again expressed their concern that certain aspects of the proposed new policy would not be enforceable, especially those areas which were shared with partners and also outside areas which were accessible to by members of the public. There was also discussion about potential reputational issues, specifically in relation to staff smoking in public places where complaints had been previously received.

Resolved:

To reject the new Smoke-free Policy for the following reasons:-

- (1) Under this Committee's terms of reference, it can only consider matters relating to staff; it has no authority to make decisions affecting members of the Council or the general public.**
- (2) Whilst not being averse to agreeing to some amendments to this policy, the Committee considered that the proposals were unlikely to be enforceable, particularly relating to shared premises and council owned car parks.**

8 Pay Policy Statement

Consideration was given to a report by the Associate Director, People & Business, which presented an updated pay policy statement for the financial year 2016/17 for approval, prior to agreement by Council and publication on the Council's website.

It was noted that chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011 stated that every local authority must prepare a pay policy statement for the financial year 2012/13 and each subsequent financial year. Wiltshire Council originally published its pay policy statement in February 2012 and the updated policy was required to be published on the website by 1 April 2016.

The Committee was informed that the existing policy had been updated to include:

- A revised introduction stating the forthcoming legislation that will impact on the council's pay arrangements. This includes the new National Living Wage, gender pay gap reporting, and the public sector exit payment cap.
- The ability to pay at a rate higher than the median pay rate for posts where there are skills shortages as stated in the Council's market supplement policy.
- Information relating to the publication of trade union facility time as required by the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.
- An updated total number of council employees and the latest pay ratios.

Resolved:

To approve the draft Pay Policy Statement for endorsement by Council on 23 February 2016 on the understanding that the budget figure would first be reviewed and updated and subject to the heading prior to para. 71 reading as follows:-

The relationship between the *basic pay* remuneration of chief officers and employees who are not chief officers.

9 Update on Local Government (Green Book) Pay Negotiations 2016/17 and consideration of the payment of the living wage

The Committee considered a report by the Associate Director, People and Business, which provided an update on the national pay negotiations that were taking place.

At its meeting on 14 December 2015, CLT considered whether the Council should adopt the Living Wage and agreed that they could not support the adoption of the Living Wage for the foreseeable future in light of the ongoing budget pressures for both the schools and non-schools teams and bearing in mind that the National Living Wage would be introduced from 2016 which would have a significant impact on lower paid staff.

During discussion, Members supported the decision of the CLT and also noted that there were currently no problems in recruiting to the lower grades.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the update on pay negotiations and that further updates would be provided when more information became available.**
- (2) To agree with the introduction of the new National Living Wage which would have a significant impact on lower paid staff and which would be introduced in April 2016.**

10 **Equality & Diversity Update**

The Committee considered a report by the Associate Director, People and Business which presented the updated Annual Equality and Diversity Employment Monitoring Report. It was noted that the Council was required to produce this information annually as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty in line with the Equality Act 2010. This was the first report to be based on a new reporting date of 1 October which had previously been 1 April each year. The reporting date had been changed to move it closer to the statutory publishing date.

Reference was made to work that had been taking place to extend the data collected on the protected characteristics on SAP which included religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, gender reassignment and caring responsibilities. Staff had been asked to complete an equalities monitoring questionnaire to provide this additional information but it was noted that 40% of staff had completed this questionnaire. Ongoing work was being carried out to explain to staff why this additional information was required.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee was due to be held on Wednesday 2 March 2016, in the Kennet Room at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

12 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.00 pm)

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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