

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2012 AT ORKNEY ROOM, 2ND FLOOR, COUNTY HALL EAST WING, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Rod Eaton, Cllr Mike Hewitt (Vice Chairman), Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Francis Morland, Cllr John Noeken, Cllr Jane Scott OBE and Cllr John Smale

Also Present:

Cllr Bill Moss

57 **Apologies for absence**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr David Jenkins.

58 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

Resolved:

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 4 July 2012.

59 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

60 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

61 **Public Participation**

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

62 **Time Off for Civic Public Duties**

Consideration was given to a report by the Service Director, HR & OD, which set out a new Time Off for Civic Public Duties Policy and Procedure for consideration. It was explained that this new policy brought together into one document existing council policies.

The Committee was informed that benchmarking data had been gathered from a number of other local authorities, the results of which had been somewhat mixed. The proposals as set out in the report were pitched at the lower end of the spectrum. Members requested that this information be made available to them and this is attached as Appendix 1.

During discussion, it was recognised that these proposals permitted an entitlement of three full days or six half days paid leave per year to perform the duties of an elected councillor and that this would be insufficient should an employee wish to stand and be elected as a councillor for a county or unitary authority.

After further discussion,

Resolved:

To approve the Time Off for Civic Public Duties Policy and Procedure, subject to the following amendment:-

Reserve Forces, Paragraph 19 to read “If you are mobilised as a member of the Reserve Forces the council will not pay your salary whilst you are on military operations. You will be paid a salary by the relevant Reserve Force.”

63 **Subsistence Policy - Accommodation and Meal Allowances**

The Committee considered a report by the Service Director, HR & OD which presented an amended and updated subsistence policy outlining subsistence rates and procedures for booking overnight accommodation. It was noted that this policy would apply to all Wiltshire Council employees with the exception of teaching staff in locally managed schools.

After discussion,

Resolved:

To approve the updated Subsistence Policy – Accommodation and Meal Allowances.

64 **Travel and Mileage Allowances Policy**

The Committee considered a report by the Service Director, HR & OD which presented an amended and updated policy to clarify what travelling expenses could be claimed and the process involved. The policy would apply to all Wiltshire Council employees with the exception of teaching staff in locally managed schools.

It was noted that following a review, the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) had determined a new approach, that in line with the transformation agenda (the promotion of flexible working and the introduction of Microsoft LYNC), the existing policy should be updated and amended to enable employees to claim business mileage from home, where the journey does not form part of their normal commute or go directly past their work base.

A full and detailed discussion took place during which certain misgivings were made concerning the likely increased costs that would arise from the introduction of this proposed new policy. However, it was pointed out that this policy reflected the Council's new culture and flexible ways of working for staff and was a much fairer system than that currently in operation. Although every employee was assigned a work base in his/her contract of employment, in many cases these places were visited on an infrequent basis depending on the nature of work undertaken. Moreover, the Council was now encouraging employees to visit clients in their workplaces or homes as part of the Council's policy to provide an improved service to its clients and customers. However, Members considered that a clearer definition was required within the policy regarding the HMRC definition of a "permanent workplace" and how this related to the employee's work base as set out in their contract of employment. It was also outlined that the policy needed to more clearly specify the definition of "goes directly past your workplace" as this could lead to inconsistent application of the policy.

Some concern was expressed at the proposal to permit cyclists to claim 40p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and the likely cost involved. However, it was pointed out that the cost was not expected to be great due to the distances these employees would need to travel for business purposes. Furthermore, this payment would hopefully act as an incentive to employees to travel to their work base by bike rather than by car, thus reducing the Council's carbon footprint.

Resolved:

- (1) To approve the updated Travel and Mileage Allowances Policy and Procedure, subject to a rewording of paragraphs 4 & 5 of the Policy as a matter of some urgency, to provide a clearer definition of employee's permanent workplace and how this relates to wording within the standard contract of employment and to more clearly define what is meant by "directly past your workplace"**

- (2) To request a review of the new arrangements after being in operation for a period of six months.

65 **Quarterly Workforce Measures - Delivering the Business Plan - Quarter ended 30 June 2012**

The Committee received a quarterly workforce report, excluding fire, police and schools staff, for the quarter ended 30 June 2012 concerning:-

Staffing Levels
Workforce Information
Sickness Absence
Health and Safety
Voluntary Staff Turnover
Disciplinary and Grievance Cases

The report also provided information relating to Workforce Costs and benchmarking Data.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Some concern was expressed at the increased voluntary turnover rate for the June quarter, which represented an increase of 1.7% to 10.0%. It was noted that this was due to a high rate in Children's & Families Social Care. The Interim Service Director, Children & Families and Integrated Youth Service was actively engaged in examining this problem in conjunction with staff and would be reporting back to this Committee with her findings. Members also noted the low rate of staff exit interviews and considered that efforts should be made to achieve an increase in rate, possibly by the use of an on line questionnaire.
- Members noted with some concern that both disciplinary and grievance cases had increased during the quarter to 6.8 (+3.8) and 2.3 (+0.3) respectively per 1000 employees; however, this still remained below the benchmark. The most disciplinary cases were in Communities (23.4 per 1000 employees, 2 during the quarter) and Neighbourhood Services (22.4 per 1000 employees, 5 during the quarter). There had been 2 grievance cases during the quarter, 1 each in Adult Care Operations and Neighbourhood Services.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report.
- (2) To request that an updated report on voluntary turnover be prepared and presented to the Committee meeting on 9 January 2013.

- (3) To request that a breakdown of the disciplinary cases in Communities and Neighbourhood Services be provided and emailed to Members of this Committee.**
- (4) To thank the Officers for the revised report format but to request further benchmarking information in future.**

66 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.50 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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Benchmarking data for Civic Public Duties policy (Aug 2011)

Huddle Reward site	Public Duty	Paid	Unpaid
Bournemouth BC	All	Max. of 30 days. Restricted to 17 days per public service	
Bournemouth BC	Jury	Paid But if ongoing salary reduced up to ma	
Borough of Poole	JP/Councillor/School Governor/Higher Education Corporation	Between 12 – 18 days. In practice only JPs & Councillors require significant time off during working hours.	Element of unpaid or flexitime where more than 12 days is sought.
Borough of Poole	Jury Service	Paid leave - minus any allowance paid.	
Borough of Poole	Special Constables		Unpaid
S. Gloucestershire	Jury	Paid – minus any allowance paid	
S. Gloucestershire	All the Statutory duties; JP/member of local authorities/ member of education body/member of health authority etc	2 full days/4 half days per month paid. To be agreed between employee and manager dependent on requirements of their post and the nature of their public duties.	Additional special leave paid or unpaid granted in special circumstances.
S. Gloucestershire	Jury	Paid – minus any allowance paid	
SW Employers data			
Authority 1.	JPs	Minimum attendance	
	Jury	Paid- minus any allowance paid	
District 1	Councillors	Up to 208 hours per year	
	JPs	Minimum attendance	
	Jury	Paid – minus any allowance paid	
District 2	JPs	Minimum attendance	
	Statutory Tribunal/ School Governor	Max. 18 days per year Member of more than one - max. 24 days	
	Jury	Paid – minus any allowance paid.	
District 3	Statutory/JP/Jury	144 hours per year	
District 4	Councillors of other local authorities	Up to 208 hour per year	

Benchmarking data for Civic Public Duties policy (Aug 2011)

	JPs	Minimum attendance	
	Jury	Paid – minus any allowance paid	
District 5	JPs	Up to 26 half days	
	School governors	Up to 26 half days	
	Jury	Paid minus any allowance paid	
Unitary 1	Councillors of other local authorities	Up to 144 hours per year	
	JPs	Minimum attendance	
	Jury	Paid minus any allowance paid	
Unitary 2	Councillors of other local authorities	Up to 208 hours per year	
	JPs	Minimum attendance	
	Jury	Paid minus any allowance paid	
County 1	JPs/members of county, district, parish councils	Not to exceed 208 hours per year	
	School Governors	Paid	
	Jury	Paid minus any allowance paid	
County 2	Councillors of other local authorities	Max of 144 working hours	
	JPs	Minimum attendance	
	Jury	Paid minus any allowance paid	
County 3	Councillors of other local authorities	Up to 208 hours per year	
	JPs	Minimum attendance	
	Jury	Paid minus any allowance paid.	