

## STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

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### MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2010 AT COMMITTEE ROOM 3, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

#### Present:

Cllr Francis Morland, Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Rod Eaton, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr John Smale, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Mark Packard, Cllr John Noeken and Cllr Jane Scott OBE

#### 14. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 15. Minutes of Previous Meeting

##### Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 10 March 2010.

#### 16. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 17. Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's announcements.

#### 18. Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

19. **Code of Conduct - Policy Update**

The Committee received a report by the Service Director HR & OD which presented an updated Code of Conduct for officers.

It was explained that this Code formed part of the terms and conditions of employment for all officers and was included within the Council's Constitution. There were currently five separate Codes of Conduct which had been in use by the former County and District Councils and there was a need for them to be harmonised to ensure that one Code applied to all staff employed by Wiltshire Council.

**Resolved:**

**To recommend Council to approve the proposed Code of Conduct for officers and to update the Council's Constitution accordingly, subject to the following minor amendments:-**

- (i) To highlight point 4 of the Code – “Breach of this code of conduct may lead to disciplinary action which could result in dismissal.”**
- (ii) To reword point 25 to reflect the current use of IT equipment and to state that this is covered by the Council's ICT Policy.**
- (iii) To amend point 26 of the Code to read as follows – “You may only use the Council telephones to make or receive private calls in exceptional circumstances, and with the permission of your manager.”**

20. **Employee Absence - Volcanic Ash**

Consideration was given to a report by the Service Director, HR & OD requesting that consideration be given to adopting a policy for the payment of staff who had been unable to attend work due to the disruption to air travel following the volcanic ash incident.

It had become apparent that the Volcanic Ash incident would not be an isolated incident and there was a significant risk that this situation would reoccur. Members considered that employees should be aware that there was a risk that they could be stranded if they chose to travel abroad by air and it was noted that the half term holidays were due to take place in a couple of weeks' time when a large number of employees were expected to take leave.

After a full discussion,

**Resolved:**

- (1) To approve a one-off retrospective payment of up to five days' paid leave to members of staff who were unable to return to work during the week commencing 19 April 2010, following the Volcanic Ash Cloud incident which consequently delayed return flights to this Country.
- (2) To agree that any further instances of disruption should be treated in line with the existing Severe Weather Policy, bearing in mind that employees are now aware of the risk taken by travelling abroad.
- (3) To rename this policy as the Time Off for Exceptional Circumstances Policy and to amend managers' discretion to authorise one of the following:-
  - (a) Take a day's leave, where the entitlement allows; or
  - (b) Make up the lost time as soon as is practicable; or
  - (c) Take unpaid leave
- (4) To follow Local Government Employers' advice for school staff, which recognises that they do not have as much flexibility as other staff in terms of their working arrangements.

21. **Pay Harmonisation - Progress Report**

The Committee received a report by the Service Director HR & OD which updated Members on the progress of Pay Harmonisation.

It was noted that at the outset of this project one of the risks identified was that school support staff would need to come within its scope. The newly formed national School Support Staff Negotiating Body had not achieved the planned national agreement which would move school support staff into a new national framework for their terms and conditions by 28 May 2010 as planned. A new deadline had been set for 1 April 2011 with an implementation date of 1 April 2012. This meant that school support staff would need to be included in the pay harmonisation exercise, which would increase the total number of staff in scope from around 5,200 to around 12,000.

**Resolved:**

- (1) To note the contents of the report.
- (2) To receive a further progress report on this project at the next meeting.

22. **Independent Safeguarding Authority - Proposal for Wiltshire Council to Meet the Cost of Mandatory Registration Fees**

Consideration was given to a joint report by the Service Directors HR & OD and DCS Commissioning requesting the Committee to consider whether the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) registration fees should be absorbed by the employers or be viewed as a personal expense for new staff in all front-line services for children and vulnerable adults, including education.

After discussion,

**Resolved:**

- (1) **To approve that the Council should cover the full costs of ISA registration so as to ensure that the workforce is adequately vetted and cleared.**
- (2) **To write to the Government encouraging the introduction of portable CRB checks rather than the current arrangements where separate checks were required in respect of each circumstance.**

23. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30am – 12.15pm)

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