

KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Human Resources Committee held in the
Council Chamber, Browfort, Bath Road, Devizes on
Thursday 7th April 2005 at 2:15 pm

PRESENT: Councillor D Campbell – Chairman

Councillor Mrs J K Coombe
Councillor A P J Duck
Councillor Mrs E M Hannaford
Councillor Mrs N G Rawlins
Councillor A H Still

Councillor Mrs M S N Taylor
Councillor B Twigger
Councillor P N Veasey
Councillor A Wood

PART 1

Items considered whilst the meeting was open to the public.

48. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 3rd February 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

49. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

50. MANPOWER INFORMATION

The Committee received the report of the Head of Human Resources on manpower statistics for the period 18th January 2005 to 10th March 2005 together with staff turnover figures contrasted with previous periods. She gave a brief summary and commented on the figures and answered questions and observations from Members of the Committee.

In particular Members mentioned stress-related absenteeism and were assured by the Head of Human Resources that mechanisms were in place to deal with such problems and support staff, although in the main stress problems were personal rather than work related.

The Head of Human Resources also reported that the Council had entered the Learning and Skills Council Employer Training Awards and was runner up in the Developing your Organization category. In addition, Mr Kimber was runner up in the category Free2Learn Training Provider of the Year.

Members recorded their congratulations to all those involved in gaining these prestigious awards.

NOTED

51. A REVIEW OF STAFF TURNOVER

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Human Resources which set out to provide Members with comparisons with other organizations to enable them to assess whether there was a turnover problem within Kennet or whether its turnover was normal for such an organization.

In comparison with other similar Authorities it was clear that whilst some other Council's had better rates of turnover, others had far worse. It was acknowledged that there were limited promotional opportunities within such a small organization which, on occasion, necessitated trained staff leaving to gain advancement. However, some 80% of the staff had been with the Council for 2 years or more and 65% 5 years or more.

The Head of Human Resources answered a number of questions from Members and in particular answered questions about the formal exit interviews that were available to staff.

RESOLVED THAT

1. The content of the report be noted
2. The Head of Human Resources be encouraged to develop additional systems to improve the Council's understanding of why staff leave the Council.

52. IMPLEMENTATION OF SINGLE STATUS

The Committee considered the joint report of the Head of Human Resources and the Environment & Amenity Services Manager which sought Members approval to the implementation of a single status package for the Council's outdoor workforce.

Members were assured that there had been extensive consultation both with all the staff concerned and the Unions and that there had been a favourable reaction to the proposals which had been a long term aim of the Council.

The proposals would be cost neutral and would be paid for by efficiencies that would produce either a cash saving or by enabling the existing staff to do more with the same amount of time and equipment.

The Environment & Amenity Services Manager answered various questions about the implementation of the scheme and it was

RESOLVED

THAT the Council approve the retrospective introduction of the single status package commencing as from 1st April 2005, for the Council's outdoor workforce within the Environment & Amenity Services.

53. PROPOSED RESTRUCTURE OF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Committee received the report of the Planning Services Manager setting out a proposed restructuring of the Property Management Team consequent upon the departure of the Council's Property Management Surveyor in August 2004. The report set out the requirements of the service and the staffing implications together with the financial implications that would follow from the implementation of the recommendations in the report.

The Officers answered various questions from Members including the costs of training for the proposed new post and the question of the employment of consultants.

RESOLVED THAT

1. The Property Management Surveyor and Property Management Administrator posts be replaced with a single post of Property Management Officer/Surveyor
2. The new post of Property Management Officer/Surveyor should be career graded to allow the existing Property Management Administrator to take up the post and train as a chartered commercial property surveyor.
3. Specialist property advice should continue to be provided by a retained consultancy which would also provide economic business advice on planning policy, negotiations of legal agreements, planning applications, and where appropriate, support for the Council's case on planning appeals.
4. That Legal Services, or someone appointed by them on a short-term contract, review the information contained in the Council's deed packets and enters that information directly into the property database. The precise boundaries of each site could be confirmed at the same time or be plotted onto the electronic map database using the Building Control administration team under control of the Property Management Officer over a period of 6 months.

54. CUSTOMER FIRST UPDATE

The Director of Resources outlined the position to Members with regard to the implementation of the Customer First project and indicated the method of selection used to staff the contact centre for the initial functions being undertaken by the project. There had been problems with one member of staff and it was possible that there would be a redundancy situation although suitable alternative employment would be offered.

It was intended to commence operations on 9th May 2005 if everything was ready and suitable publicity with regard to the change in operating method would be undertaken.

55. DELEGATED ACTION

There was none to report.

56. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – SECTION 100(A)(4)

RESOLVED

THAT in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 11 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

PART 2

Item considered whilst the meeting was closed to the public.

57. CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS

The Committee received a brief oral report from the Head of Human Resources on the current state of negotiations with regard to the changes proposed by the office of the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of Local Government pensions.

Chairman
16th June 2005