



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Personnel Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 8 September 2009 at 2.00 pm at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present:

Councillors

Roger Glithero (**Chairman**)
Wendy Brackenbury
Andy Mercer

David Oliver
Katy Everitt
Keith Osborne

Chief Executive (CX)
Head of Organisational Development (KE)
Democratic Services Manager (KO)

Action

1.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2009 were approved and signed as a correct record.

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 David Brackenbury and Sylvia Hughes sent apologies.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/QUESTIONS

- 3.1 There were no declarations and no questions

4.0 CURRENT OUTSTANDING STAFF VACANCIES

- 4.1 The Sub-Committee received a Schedule of current outstanding staff vacancies, arranged in three categories (a) vacant posts not being filled (b) vacant hours not being filled and (c) appointments made but postholders not yet started.

- 4.2 Members noted the information and confirmed that the format of the report was appropriate (apart from increasing the size of print to enable the report to be produced in A3 size) and that the up to date situation should be reported to all subsequent Sub-Committee meetings.

**KE/
ML**

5.0 XCHANGE

- 5.1 The Sub-Committee received and noted the minutes of the first meeting of Xchange – the new employee communication and consultation group - held on 13 August 2009. (These can be viewed on EUNICE by accessing the Xchange button).

5.2 KE felt that the meeting had been very encouraging and the group had considered important issues. The Chairman of the Sub-Committee indicated his willingness to attend a future meeting of the group to discuss future challenges facing the Council, if required. **KE**

5.3 The next meeting of the group would be held on 10 October.

6.0 CONSULTATION ON STAFF BENEFITS

6.1 CX referred to minute 10 of the minutes of Xchange and reported that, as part of the Budget Review, staff were being consulted on the removal of the following benefits:-

- Life Assurance Cover – the Council currently paid insurance premiums so that employees who died in service would have twice their annual salary paid to their estate. (Cost £16,720)
- BUPA membership for private health care (Cost of premium with National Insurance £66,000).

The consultation would end on 17 September.

6.2 CX had e-mailed all employees about the proposals, and a questionnaire had been placed on EUNICE, with 110 responses so far. A meeting would be held with UNISON on 23 September to discuss the outcome of the consultation. Possible options for changes to Car Benefits would also be raised at the meeting. **CX/ KE**

7.0 WORKPLACE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY – OUTCOME OF STAFF CONSULTATION

7.1 KE circulated a note of the breakdown of responses to the staff survey on the proposed introduction of a zero tolerance policy on the use of drugs and alcohol. The comments from staff who disagreed or strongly disagreed with the policy were outlined, but it was noted that a majority of the 79 responders were in favour of the proposed policy.

7.2 Despite the outcome of the survey, the Sub-Committee did not consider there was a need for a specific Drugs and Alcohol Policy. Members believed that the Council had responsible staff and since the Council did not have a current problem, it was felt that – **KE/ CX**

- (a) any issues arising from drug or alcohol misuse should be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary and Capability Scheme and
- (b) staff should be given clear advice on the help available if problems of drug and alcohol misuse arise.

8.0 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 The Sub-Committee noted that the next meeting had been arranged for Tuesday 20 October 2009. **KO**

Chairman