



Personnel Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 25 November 2013 at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present: Councillors	Roger Glithero JP (Chairman)
	Wendy Brackenbury (from item under minute 10 onwards)
	Glenn Harwood MBE
	Steven North
	Jeremy Taylor
	David Oliver Chief Executive
	Sharn Matthews Executive Director
	Katy Everitt Head of Resources and Organisational Development
	Lisa Hyde Head of Customer and Community Services
	David Reed Head of Planning Services
	Aime Armstrong Human Resources Manager
	Karen Britton Planning Policy and Conservation Manager

1.0 MINUTES

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2013 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

2.0 APOLOGIES

- 2.1 No apologies for absence had been received.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 No declarations of interest were made.

4.0 QUESTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

- 4.1 There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3

5.0 WORKFORCE STATISTICS

- 5.1 The Sub-Committee reviewed data concerning staff sickness, turnover and the number of staff employed.

- 5.2 It was noted that there had been a slight increase in the rolling 12 month overall sickness absence levels since the last report to the Sub-Committee and the Corporate Management Team would focus absence management on short-term sickness absence..

6.0 VACANT POSTS UPDATE

- 6.1 The Sub-Committee received a report on:-

- (a) Vacant posts
- (b) New posts created on the establishment
- (c) Posts temporarily vacant
- (d) Budget savings, and
- (e) Empty posts/hours still on establishment but with no budget.

- 6.2 Members were apprised of progress made in the recruitment of the Head of ICT and it was also noted that the vacancy for the post of Housing Strategy and Delivery Manager had recently been advertised.

7.0 PENSION AUTO-ENROLMENT

- 7.1 The Human Resources Manager presented a report on the implications for the Council arising from the statutory requirement to auto-enrol staff into the Local Government Pension Scheme.

- 7.2 The Council had been issued with a staging date of 1 February 2014, by when staff who met the eligibility criteria needed to be enrolled into the pension scheme. However, as part of the transitional arrangements, the Council was entitled to delay auto-enrolment until 1 October 2017, provided that members of staff were written to giving the option of joining the pension scheme before this date should they wish to do so.

- 7.3 It was understood that the transitional arrangements would also apply to any Members who met the eligibility criteria, although definitive legal advice was difficult to obtain as the political intent on this issue was uncertain at present.

- 7.4 Where an employee was auto-enrolled and subsequently opted out of the pension scheme, the employee's contributions would be refunded. It was unclear whether this would also be the case with employer contributions and the Human Resources Manager undertook to clarify the position and advise the Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED:

That, having carefully considered the Equalities Impact Assessment, it be endorsed.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

- i) That pension auto enrolment for any staff eligible before 1 February 2014 be delayed until 1 October 2017
- ii) That staff be written to offering the option of joining the pension scheme before 1 October 2017 if they wish to do so.

((Reason: to meet legislative requirements))

8.0 REVENUE SUPPORT GROUP – ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS

- 8.1 The Head of Customer and Community Services reported that the Council retained a small number of staff on “zero hours” contracts to undertake ad hoc duties that were time bound, seasonal or of a temporary nature. These arrangements were used for the “Revenue Support Group” (RSG) staff, who formed part of the Revenues and Benefits service.
- 8.2 No new staff had been added to the RSG pool over the past three years and the salary budget had been reduced. Some of the duties undertaken by the RSG had been transferred to permanent staff, which had impacted on the Customer Services team to the extent that this was having an adverse affect on the team’s performance.
- 8.3 It was proposed to transfer some of the staff budget from the RSG group to recruit a part-time Customer Services Assistant. This would involve reducing the RSG salary budget from £59,000 to £47,000 in a full year and, to enable the new post to be filled from January 2014, £3,000 would be transferred from the existing RSG budget in the current financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of a part time Customer Services Advisor from within the existing salary budgets be approved.

((Reason - to make best use of existing resources))

9.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business because exempt information, as defined under paragraphs 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

10.0 PLANNING POLICY AND CONSERVATION TEAM (STAFF PROPOSAL 18)

- 10.1 The Head of Planning Services presented a report outlining proposals for the structure of the Planning Policy and Conservation Team in the light of three fixed term posts expiring in 2014 and to progress the emerging work programme of the team.
- 10.2 Members reiterated the need for the team to be appropriately resourced to enable the anticipated future workload to be carried out.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the report be noted

- ii) That the changes set out in the report be approved in principle and consultations take place with any affected employees.
- iii) That the Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Chairman of this Sub-Committee, be authorised to implement the changes set out in the report provided that there are no significant issues raised during the consultation process.

(Reason: to provide resources to progress the Council's local plan strategy as quickly as possible following the Review of the Core Spatial Strategy)

11.0 COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

11.1 The Head of Customer and Community Services reported that, further to the Sub-Committee's approval for the restructuring of the Communications Team in September 2012 by the creation of two fixed term posts, the team's work programme for the future was now clearer and it was proposed to retain the current structure by making the posts permanent.

11.2 RESOLVED:

That the posts of Communications Manager and Communications Officer be approved as permanent posts.

(Reason - to provide continuation of service from within the existing Communications Team)

12.0 UPDATE ON STAFF PROPOSAL SP27

12.1 Further to the Sub-Committee's consideration of this proposal at its last meeting, the Head of Resources and Organisational Development presented a report providing updated information on the proposal to establish a business transformation team to undertake robust business process reviews to improve efficiency and customer service at reduced costs and ensure projects have appropriate corporate support to help deliver the Council's Corporate Plan..

12.2 RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and, subject to the outcome of staff consultation, the introduction of the Business Transformation Team be approved.

(Reason - to ensure that the Council has the skills and the capacity to deliver projects to reduce costs and ensure continued progress in delivering the Corporate Plan)

Chairman