



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Personnel Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 20 July 2015 at 10.30am at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present: Councillors Wendy Brackenbury
Roger Glithero
Glenn Harwood MBE
Steven North
Sarah Peacock

David Oliver	Chief Executive
Sharn Matthews	Executive Director
Katy Everitt	Head of Resources and Organisational Development
Paul Smith	Senior Democratic Services Officer

1.0 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Roger Glithero be appointed Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee for the year 2015/16

2.0 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sarah Peacock be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee for the year 2015/16.

3.0 MINUTES

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4.0 APOLOGIES

4.1 No apologies for absence were received.

5.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

5.1 The following interests were declared in the items listed below:

Officer/Member	Item	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
David Oliver, Sharn Matthews, Katy Everitt and Paul Smith	Family and Work/life Balance Policy; Staff Benefits Policy	Members of staff affected by the policies.		Yes.
Cllrs Steven North and Sarah Peacock	Permanent Extension of Hours Request – Environmental Services	Members of Rushden Town Council, which is funding the additional hours		Yes.

6.0 QUESTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10.3

6.1 There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.3

7.0 WORKFORCE STATISTICS

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

8.0 VACANT POSTS UPDATE

8.1 The Sub-Committee received a report on posts currently vacant within the Council.

9.0 FAMILY AND WORK/LIFE BALANCE POLICY UPDATE

9.1 The Head of Resources and Organisational Development reported that a number of statutory changes to maternity pay and parental leave had been incorporated into the family and work/life balance policy when it had been approved in 2013 and the update incorporated changes which had not been anticipated when the earlier policy had been adopted.

RESOLVED:

That after fully considering the implications of the equality impact assessment, the changes to the policy be approved.

(Reason – to ensure the Council's HR Policies and Procedures remain up-to-date and take into account changes in employment legislation)

10.0 STAFF BENEFITS POLICY

10.1 The Head of Resources and Organisational Development reported that a review had been undertaken of the Staff Benefits Policy. Staff and UNISON had been consulted on the revised policy, which was submitted for the Sub-Committee's consideration.

10.2 A number of policies within the Staff Benefits Policy reflected existing practice, but which had not previously been documented.

10.3 The Sub-Committee considered the arrangements for the closure of the Council Offices on 24 December 2015 for the Christmas and New Year holidays and was of the view that the Offices should close to the public at 4.00pm. In recognition of the contribution staff had made to the Council over the past year, staff would not be expected to make up the time arising from the early closure of the offices.

RESOLVED: That

i) the policy be approved.

(Reason – to ensure the Council’s HR Policies and Procedures remain up-to-date and take into account changes in employment legislation)

ii) the Council Offices be closed at 4.00pm on 24 December 2015 for the Christmas and New Year holiday closure and where necessary a flexi-time credit of up to 1 hour be given to each member of staff to bring their working hours to 7 hours 24 minutes for that day.

(Reason - in recognition of staff contribution to the council’s service delivery with a lower level of staff over the past year)

11.0 REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICES APPRENTICE

11.1 The Executive Director presented a report seeking the creation of a new Revenue and Benefit Services Apprentice post to undertake work previously undertaken by the Revenue Support Group (RSG) staff. The RSG comprised a group of casual employees providing administrative support to the service and over the past five years the number of employees in the RSG had reduced from 15 to 7.

11.2 In previous years the reduction in numbers had not impacted greatly on the service. However, the availability of the RSG had now become a concern and administrative tasks were often being absorbed into officers’ roles, taking them away from direct service delivery. The reduced availability of hours was projected to create a budget underspend of £10,000 in 2015/16.

RESOLVED:

That a Revenue and Benefit Services Apprentice post be created.

(Reason - to maintain service delivery through a period of significant change)

12.0 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 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, may be disclosed.

13.0 PERMANENT EXTENSION OF HOURS REQUEST – ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

13.1 The Sub-Committee considered a report seeking to make permanent the extension in working hours of a part-time post whose hours had been increased from 22 hours to 37 hours per week for a two year period commencing on 5th May 2013

RESOLVED:

That the working hours of the Environmental Services post be permanently increased to 37 per week and that the additional hours be funded through external contributions as identified in the report.

(Reason – To ensure the post is adequately resourced to deliver required service levels)

14.0 FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT REQUEST

14.1 The Executive Director reported a request for flexible retirement under ENC's Pensions Discretion Policy & Procedure.

14.2 It was confirmed that each request made under the policy was considered on its own merits and the determination of this request would not set a precedent for any future requests.

RESOLVED: That

- i) the flexible retirement be approved in principle, provided a suitable candidate to cover for the reduced hours can be identified through an open recruitment process.
- ii) the final decision be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Personnel Sub-Committee, subject to the proposed change being delivered within existing budget and a suitable candidate being appointed.

(Reason - to retain capacity, knowledge and skills in the recovery team)

Chairman