



Personnel Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 1 February 2011 at 2.00 pm at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present:

Councillors

Roger Glithero (Chairman)
Steven North (Leader of the Council)

Wendy Brackenbury
Philip Hardcastle
Sylvia Hughes

David Oliver
Katy Everitt
Aime Armstrong
Rachel Reeds

Chief Executive (DO)
Head of Resources and Organisational Development (KE)
Human Resources Manager (AA)
Democratic Services Officer (RR)

Action

1.0 MINUTES

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2010 were approved.

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 No apologies were received.

3.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/QUESTIONS

3.1 There were no declarations by, or questions from, Members.

4.0 XCHANGE

4.1 Members received and noted the minutes of the Xchange Group held on 20 December.

5.0 WORKFORCE INFORMATION

5.1 The chairman welcomed Aime Armstrong, Human Resources Manager, to her first meeting of the sub-committee.

5.2 The sub-committee reviewed data about staff sickness, turnover and the number of staff employed. It noted that total sickness levels were just above the private sector average and considerably below the public sector average, and that the

Corporate Management Team was not concerned about the increased turnover and was using it as an opportunity to review whether posts could be left vacant.

- 5.3 The sub-committee requested that the information be shared with the rest of the councillors as an attachment to the minutes. Officers reported that the information would also be put on the intranet for staff to view.
- 5.4 Members asked questions on reported causes of sickness absence and how the issue of persistent sick leave was approached. Officers explained that although 'stress, depression and mental health' was the highest cause of sickness days, it was the sixth or seventh most frequently recorded reason for short term sickness. The figures would continue to be monitored to see if it would become an increasing cause of absence as research suggested this would be the case during challenging times. Regarding persistent sick leave, Members noted current procedure and that the current policy was being reviewed. The updated policy would be submitted to the sub-committee for consideration at its next meeting.
- 5.5 Members noted that the Council had managed staff numbers down by almost 10% over the past two years and that future staffing structures and roles should focus on delivery of outcomes in the new corporate plan..

6.0 ESTABLISHMENT UPDATE

- 6.1 The sub-committee received a report on savings arising from holding posts vacant and noted its contents. The sub-committee would look at permanently reducing the establishment by deleting vacant posts once the new corporate plan was in place.

7.0 STAFF PAY AND BENEFITS

- 7.1 The sub-committee received a report setting out the steps the Council had taken to reduce its employee costs, negotiations taking place between the national employers and trade unions for 2011/12, and a proposal for a local agreement to give those employees earning less than £21,000 per annum a one-off pay rise of £250.
- 7.2 The sub-committee recognised the staff's co-operation regarding the removal of private healthcare and life assurance, the reduction in mileage rates and the lack of a pay award in 2010/11. It agreed that any further reduction in staff pay or benefits would be counterproductive. It did, however, agree that it would revisit this issue if the national pay award resulted in a more generous pay and benefit package. It was also confirmed that this decision would not prevent local agreements being negotiated with staff and trade unions at a later date.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That consultation can begin locally with all employees and UNISON to agree to a one-off pay rise of £250 being awarded in 2011/12 to all employees who earn less than £21,000 per annum.

8.0 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

8.1 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.

9.0 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS STAFF PROPOSALS

9.1 Now that the announcement had been made about the departure of the Chief Finance Officer, the following decisions (which were not spelt out in detail in Minute 7.1 of the last meeting), approved by the Policy and Resources Committee on 17 January 2011 (minute 317 refers), were confirmed by the Personnel Sub-Committee for transparency:

- (1) That the Council agree to the departure of the Chief Finance Officer under the terms of a compromise agreement.
- (2) That post 02/000 be deleted from the establishment with duties other than the s151 role being allocated to the Chief Executive, the remaining Executive Director, the Head of Resources and Organisational Development and the Finance Manager.
- (3) That the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader and the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, to negotiate the provision of s151 support for a sum no greater than £25,000 per annum.
- (4) That the annual net savings of £90,000 be noted.

9.2 DO reported that a compromise agreement had been signed and the Chief Finance Officer would be leaving on 8 April 2011. Allocation of his responsibilities had been carried out and negotiations were nearly complete for the engagement of the services of an external s151 officer from a neighbouring council. A briefing note for Members would be circulated once a formal agreement had been signed in respect of this arrangement. **DO**

9.3 All other previous staffing proposals had been completed.

10.0 STAFF PROPOSAL

10.1 RESOLVED:

That formal consultation about possible changes relating to the staffing proposal at agenda item 10 can begin. **AA**

Chairman