



Personnel Sub-Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on 22 March 2011 at 2.00 pm at East Northamptonshire House, Thrapston

Present:

Councillors

Roger Glithero (Chairman)

Wendy Brackenbury
Philip Hardcastle
Sylvia Hughes

David Oliver
Katy Everitt
Aime Armstrong
Keith Osborne

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

Action

1.0 MINUTES

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2011 were approved.

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Councillor Steven North (Leader of the council) sent his apologies.

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 18 January 2011.

5.0 WORKFORCE INFORMATION

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

5.2 It was reported that the information would be sent electronically to all other councillors.

KO

6.0 ESTABLISHMENT UPDATE

- 6.1 The sub-committee received a report on savings arising from holding posts vacant and the management restructuring in 2010. The contents were noted. .
- 6.2 Members agreed that Aime Armstrong and Rosanne Fleming would review the format and content of the report to remove historical data that was no longer relevant and produce a revised version for future meetings..

**AA/
RF**

7.0 NATIONAL PAY AWARD UPDATE

- 7.1 The sub-committee was advised that the option of a pay freeze for those earning over £21,000 and a £250 pay rise for those below that figure had been communicated to staff. The offer had been accepted by UNISON and would be implemented from 1 April.
- 7.2 Members endorsed the action taken.

8.0 BROADBAND ALLOWANCES

- 8.1 Members were advised of the steps taken to remove broadband payments to staff. These allowances were initially introduced where dial up services had been insufficient, or officers had no home internet access for personal use. However, some 95% of households who had access to the internet now connected via broadband. CMT had therefore decided it was no longer appropriate to pay the allowance and, with effect from 1 April 2011, broadband reimbursement would no longer be paid to any members of staff.
- 8.2 A saving of £5,591 would be made.

9.0 OUT OF HOURS POLICY

- 9.1 Consideration was given to a new out of hours policy, to replace the current varied arrangements in place. This followed the outcome of a project group set up to review stand by and call out arrangements across the council and identify future options for these arrangements which were cost effective, fit for purpose and consistent.
- 9.2 The new policy set a rate of £70.50 for any member of staff responding to an out of hours incident, including ICT and Building Control. The 'on call' period for Environmental Services had been identified as Friday, Saturday, Sunday and any bank or statutory holidays. In these circumstances, named officers on a rota would be paid the above daily rate regardless of whether they were called out.
- 9.3 Extensive consultation had taken place with affected staff and agreement reached with UNISON. The new arrangements would generate savings of some £15,000 per annum.

RESOLVED:

That the new Out of Hours policy (as set out in appendix 1 to these minutes) be approved and implemented from 1 April 2011.

AA

(Reason - to reduce costs and have a fair and consistent policy applied across the council.)

10.0 QUALIFICATION PAYMENTS

- 10.1 The sub-committee considered changes to the current policy relating to staff qualification courses. It was proposed that the council would no longer automatically fully fund an approved qualification course. Instead, the Head of Service, with their line manager, would decide whether the course would be fully funded, or whether a contribution (in time and/or money) would be made towards it, or whether no contribution would be made. An interest free loan may be made to help meet course fees if not fully funded.
- 10.2 It was also proposed that employees who left the council during or within two years of completing a course, would be required to repay fees – or a proportion thereof – even if they joined another council. At present, the repayment provisions only applied if employees left to work outside local government.
- 10.3 The changes would only apply to staff having a qualification course approved after 1 April 2011.

RESOLVED:

That the amended policy relating to payments for staff qualifications (as set out in appendix 2 to these minutes) be approved.

AA

(Reason - to save the council money whilst ensuring staff are supported in their development.)

11.0 CREATING ENC APPRENTICESHIPS

- 11.1 Authority was sought to create a new East Northamptonshire Council (ENC) apprenticeship scheme. Two potential posts had been identified – one in customer services and the other in IT. The HR Manager had been working with the National Apprenticeship Scheme to set up the two apprenticeships. A pay scheme for apprentices was currently being negotiated with UNISON but the total would be within the approved budget. The training costs of the apprenticeship framework would be paid for directly by the government.
- 11.2 It was hoped that the two apprentices would be in post in April 2011.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given to the creation of an ENC apprenticeship scheme.

(Reason – to reduce costs and provide training opportunities for local residents.)

AA

12.0 URGENT ITEM – SECTION 100B(4)(b), LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 12.1 The chairman announced that he had agreed to an additional, urgent item on payroll arrangements because of the need to address the matter in the current cycle of meetings and ensure that arrangements were in place as quickly as possible.

13.0 PAYROLL ARRANGEMENTS

- 13.1 The HR Manager reported that the Payroll Officer was leaving the council and this now provided the opportunity for the payroll function to be examined with a

view to introducing a different approach and achieve savings in due course. **AA**
Various options had been considered and the proposed solution was to enter into a shared service arrangement with Corby Borough Council, building on the EnCor shared finance service. It had not been possible to prepare a detailed paper for the sub-committee's consideration but it was proposed that this be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee on 11 April. Members concurred with this suggestion.

14.0 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.

15.1 UPDATE ON STAFF PROPOSAL

15.1 Further to minute 10.1 of the last meeting, the Head of Resources and OD reported that consultation was taking place with affected postholders.

16.0 STAFF PROPOSALS

16.1 Proposal SP3

RESOLVED:

That formal consultation be commenced about possible changes relating to the staffing proposal at agenda item 14 and a further report be made to the sub-committee in due course. **KE**

16.2 Proposal SP4

RESOLVED:

That formal consultation be commenced about possible changes relating to the staffing proposal at agenda item 15 and a further report be made to the sub-committee in due course. **KE**

16.3 Proposal SP5

RESOLVED:

That formal consultation be commenced about possible changes relating to the staffing proposal at agenda item 16 and a further report be made to the sub-committee in due course. **KE/
TW**

17.0 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

17.1 The chairman thanked the officers and members of the sub-committee for their work over the last 12 months.

Chairman