

SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of a Special Employment Committee held on Thursday, 20 October 2011 at 2.30pm in Room 1, Floor 3 the Guildhall, Portsmouth.

(NB These minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting which can be found at www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

Present

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Chair)
Councillor Hugh Mason (Deputising for
Councillor Leo Madden)
Councillor Lynne Stagg
Councillor Rob Wood
Councillor Simon Boshier

Officers

Mr David Williams, Chief Executive
Mr Michael Lawther, City Solicitor and Monitoring Officer
Kay White, Head of Human Resources
Stephen Todd, Senior Manager Pay and Policy
Jacqueline Coonie Senior Manager Employee Relations
Chris Ward Head of Finance
Ama Juss Employment Lawyer
Shaun Tetley Payroll and Pensions Manager

45 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Leo Madden. Councillor Hugh Mason deputised for him. Apologies were also received from Councillor Jim Fleming.

46 Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Wood declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in that his son-in-law works for Harbour Special School. Councillor Lynne Stagg declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in that her daughter-in-law is a teacher in a Portsmouth School.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson said that deputation requests had been received from Mr Carl Whittaker GMB Union and from Lindsay Williams of Unison. Carl Whittaker gave his deputation and said that the unions needed information about the views of Employment Committee concerning the unions' proposals.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson said that he was looking for detailed proposals in writing to include costs and savings and that these were to be agreed with Chris Ward. Discussion could only take place when the facts were known.

Lindsay Williams of Unison then gave her deputation and said that the union was currently agreeing a financial model. The union was looking at severance models (not redundancy) with a view to allowing staff to go gracefully. Ms Williams went on to say that she would welcome guidance on proposed severance pay multipliers that were realistic as the unions wanted to use their time productively. With regard to the proposed freeze on increments, Ms Williams said that she felt this was an attack on a small number of people and didn't affect all of the workforce and this was likely to be divisive. Ms Williams also said that she did not share the committee's previously expressed concerns about the perception of the public on union proposals as she felt the public would recognise that the union proposals were about valuing staff and that savings would be delivered in the long run.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson said that the list of multipliers was 1, 1.25, 1.5, 2 and 2.5.

The Chief Executive said that these had already been discussed. He was happy to look at some modelling using the various multipliers but said that it was important that both sides had parameters within which to work.

47 Exclusion of Press and Public

It was proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson seconded by Councillor Hugh Mason that under the provisions of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, the press and public be excluded for the consideration of the following item on the grounds that the report contains information defined as exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

This was agreed.

48 Exempt Report from the Chief Executive on Terms and Conditions

The Chief Executive introduced the report which updated members on progress to date and which sought direction from members on how they wished to proceed with negotiations.

Members discussed the options in the report and unanimously agreed on a way forward.

It was agreed that meetings of Employment Committee would need to be more frequent than the scheduled meetings – probably fortnightly.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson asked that Councillor Jim Patey be invited to all Employment Committee meetings as an observer.

The meeting concluded at 3.40pm

VJP/CB
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