

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF A MEETING of the Employment Committee held on Friday 2 December 2011 at 12.45pm in the Executive Meeting Room, 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

Councillors Gerald Vernon-Jackson (Chair)
Leo Madden (Vice-Chair)
Lynne Stagg
Rob Wood
Jim Fleming
Donna Jones (deputising for
Councillor Simon Boshier)
Jim Patey (observing)

Officers

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

52 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Simon Boshier and Councillor Donna Jones attended as his deputy.

53 Declarations of Interests

Councillor Rob Wood declared a personal, non-prejudicial Code of Conduct interest in that his son-in-law works for Harbour School.
Councillor Lynne Stagg declared a personal, non-prejudicial Code of Conduct interest in that her daughter is a teacher in a Portsmouth school.
Councillor Jim Patey declared a personal non prejudicial Code of Conduct interest in that he is a life member of Gmb Union.

54 Minutes of the meetings held on 4 October 2011 and 20 October 2011 (and exempt appendix) (AI 3)

RESOLVED that

(1) the minutes of the meeting of the Employment Committee held on 4 October 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record subject to the inclusion of an action point to reconvene the working party on sickness absence membership which was agreed as being Councillors Leo Madden, Hugh Mason with Councillor Donna Jones being the new Conservative member..

(2) the minutes of the meeting of the Employment Committee held on 20 October 2011 (and exempt appendix) be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

55 Performance Development Review (AI 4)

The Head of Human Resources explained that a report had been brought to the Employment Committee meeting held on 4 October 2011 but that members had requested a revised report be brought to the committee to include the specific points contained in the resolution passed at that meeting.

During discussion the following points were clarified:

- “In the work” discussions - meant that most performance issues are resolved as they arise but if there is a particularly important or difficult aspect of performance then this would be discussed in a separate meeting rather than in the open working environment.
- A “triad” in the context of the scheme was something that had been created during the Leadership and Management Programme (LaMP) and meant that 3 people formed a group to support one another particularly in how to respond to improvements following 360 degree feedback.

Councillor Leo Madden asked which committee had taken a decision that PDRs did not have to be done by everyone on an annual basis and also when that decision had been taken. After discussion, members were advised that no formal decision had been taken by members to change the process. It seems that the PDR process had undergone a change in some services - perhaps because of “systems thinking” where the emphasis was more on immediately raising concerns with staff and this was sometimes at the expense of adhering to a fixed annual PDR arrangement.

Councillor Wood said that the Auditor had picked up inconsistencies in the PDR process across PCC and that a report had been requested by the Governance and Audit Committee which had then asked for a report to be referred to Employment Committee.

Councillor Madden made the point that if the PDR process had continued unchanged in accordance with members’ original decision, there would have been no need for this report to have been written or brought to a committee.

During further discussion the following points were made:

- If a person did not get on with his or her manager this would be addressed as part of the process as all appraisals were seen by the appraiser's manager. If an individual felt that he or she had not been treated fairly it was open to them to invoke the grievance procedure.
- Members were pleased that the document was unequivocal about PDRs being mandatory for all PCC staff.
- The City Solicitor said that the city council has a Values and Behaviours group and that the group would be producing a list of expected behaviours which would then form part of the PDR process.

Members were unanimously in favour of the report.

RESOLVED that members

(1) approve the attached PDR policy and agree the purpose and principles on which the future management of performance assessment and development will be based within PCC;

(2) agree that the success of the implementation of this policy be reviewed on an annual basis and reported to Employment Committee;

(3) agree that each Strategic Director will review the quality of implementation from both the organisation and staff perspective for the services that report to them as part of their line management of each Head of Service; and

(4) agree each manager must ensure the completion and quality for their own section and for monitoring the implementation including quality achieved by those managers who report to them.

56 Employment Law Update (AI 5)

Ms Ama Juss introduced the update which covered agency workers' regulations, default retirement age, national minimum wage increases, employment tribunal statistics, and proposed changes for 2012.

RESOLVED that the employment law update be noted.

57 Report on Severance Scheme (AI 6)

Deputations were heard from the three unions, and the Chair of the committee allowed a discussion to take place so that queries raised by the unions could be addressed.

- It was confirmed that the voluntary severance scheme and the voluntary redundancy scheme would not be run side-by-side but that the voluntary redundancy scheme would be replaced by the voluntary severance scheme.
- Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson said that the voluntary redundancy scheme would cease and although it was possible that this would be reintroduced at some stage in the future, there was no guarantee that this would happen.

58 Exclusion of Press and Public

It was proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson and seconded by Councillor Donna Jones that the meeting should move into exempt session and this was agreed.

RESOLVED 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.

59 Report on Severance Scheme

A discussion took place concerning the details of the proposal to change from a voluntary redundancy scheme to a voluntary severance scheme and an agreement on the way forward was reached. A special meeting of Employment Committee would be set up before Christmas 2011.

60 Review of the Formal Action Policy and the application of Special Precautionary Leave (AI 9)

It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the special meeting.

The Chair of the committee asked that the agenda for the next scheduled meeting should include a request for the Housing Manager to attend to explain the sickness absence levels in his service.

Councillor Madden circulated a copy of a bullet-pointed list concerning the proposed increment freeze and asked that as this had been circulated to all members by a person or persons unknown, a written response in the form of a commentary should be provided by the Chief Executive and circulated to all members and this was agreed.

The meeting concluded at 13.55 pm.

Chair

VJP/CB
6 December 2011
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