

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING of the Employment Committee held on
Tuesday, 16 June 2015 at 12.15 pm at the Conference Room B - Civic Offices

Present

Councillor Donna Jones (in the chair)
Councillor Luke Stubbs (Vice-Chair)
Councillor John Ferrett
Councillor Darren Sanders
Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

Officers Present

David Williams, Chief Executive
Michael Lawther, City Solicitor
Jon Bell, Director of HR, Legal & Procurement
Chris Ward, Director of Finance & Information Service
(S151 Officer)

18. Apologies for Absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Linda Symes. Councillor Steve Hastings attended as her standing deputy. Councillor Luke Stubbs apologised for having to leave the meeting at 12.45 pm.

19. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

Councillor John Ferrett declared an interest in agenda item 8 in that his wife works at a primary school in the city. Councillor Ferrett said he would leave the meeting for that item.

20. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2015 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Employment Committee held on 3 March 2015 be confirmed and signed by the chair as a correct record.

21. Living Wage (AI 8)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Members of the committee agreed to vary the order of the agenda. The chair reminded members that Appendix 3 of the report was exempt and that if it were to be discussed at the meeting, provision had been made for this to take place in exempt session. Mr Jon Bell introduced the report which provided the committee with an update following the implementation of a living wage for employees of the council. He advised members that the background to this could be found in paragraph 3 of the report. He advised members that the

impact of implementing the living wage allowance in terms of costs for PCC were set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report.

Mr Bell said that paragraph 4.1 establishes that with effect from 1 April 2015, 37 schools had adopted the living wage allowance, nine schools had not adopted the living wage allowance at that time but that seven of those had committed to adopting it in the future. The remaining two schools wished to undertake further cost analysis before committing to implementation of the living wage from any specific date. The chair of the committee asked Mr Bell to email a list of the schools that had not yet adopted the living wage so that she could write to them to discover their intentions.

Members then wished to discuss matters relating to the exempt appendix.

It was proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, seconded by Councillor Steve Hastings that the meeting move into exempt session. Upon being put to the vote 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 exempt appendix on the grounds that it contains information defined as exempt in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972..

During exempt session, Mr Bell explained the situation concerning the legal advice given in relation to agency workers. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the situation had changed now that the majority of schools had agreed to pay the living wage. Mr Bell said that there were still issues to be resolved as a result of implementation of the living wage and these were being worked on.

The committee then **RESOLVED to move back into open session.**

RESOLVED that Employment Committee

- (1) noted the progress made to implement the living wage, particularly with regard to schools;**
- (2) agreed that a report is presented to Employment Committee (following Living Wage Week in November 2015), with the purpose of providing further information and recommendations about the living wage allowance.**

22. Contractual Notice Period Arrangements (AI 4)
(TAKE IN REPORT)

Jon Bell introduced the report and explained that it applies to senior staff when they leave the organisation. Specifically, members had asked whether pay in lieu of notice (PILON) should be the default position in the event of senior officers leaving the organisation through redundancy. During discussion the following matters were clarified:

- Mr Bell said that once notice is served that employee is considered to be at risk and would have redeployment options. However PILON means that an employee ceases to be employed so from that point no redeployment options would be open to that person.
- The Chief Executive said that recommendation (2) changed the position slightly in that there would now be an instruction to the Chief Executive and/or Director of HR, Legal & Procurement to consult with the chair of the Employment Committee whereas currently consultation is not compulsory.

There followed a discussion about recommendation (2)(ii) concerning who should be consulted.

Following further discussion members agreed revised wording for the recommendations.

RESOLVED that members

- (i) note the impacts detailed in section 4 of this report and the legal implications detailed in section 6 and in light of these to maintain the current position whereby PILON remains available as an option that can be exercised when circumstances make it appropriate to do so;**
- (ii) Instruct the Chief Executive and/or Director of HR Legal and Procurement to consult with the Chair of this Committee whenever a chief officer departs the council, to decide whether PILON should be applied in that case. The relevant policy to be amended accordingly.**

23. Sickness Absence Update (AI 5)

(TAKE IN REPORT)

Jon Bell introduced the report and said he was disappointed to have to report that in the period since the last quarterly update in March 2015 the level of sickness absence has increased from 7.88 to 8.73 average days per person per year. He said that this represented a change from the overall downward trend in recent months.

The new corporate target is to reduce sickness absence levels to an average seven days per person per year.

Mr Bell said that the council will continue to offer flu vaccinations in 2015 and that HR continues to support managers with their efforts to maximise attendance by providing absence data and access to a responsive occupational health service as well as support with formal action meetings.

Members were disappointed with the figures and discussed possible ways in which to improve the situation. One suggestion was to contact those who had been off in the medium or long term over the last 12 months to ask how PCC could have helped in their return to work. Members also suggested that the efficacy of the occupational health role could be looked at and suggested

possibly inviting health consultants to the next meeting of Employment Committee.

RESOLVED

- (1) to continue to monitor sickness absence on a quarterly basis and to ensure appropriate management action is taken to address absenteeism.**
- (2) That Public Health co-ordinate the flu jab vaccination campaign for 2015 to encourage the uptake of vaccinations, especially where directorates have contact with NHS defined risk groups or had particularly low uptake in 2014. The cost of vaccinations to be covered by directorates.**
- (3) That the Director of HR, Legal and Procurement be asked to carry out further analysis and research into the reasons for absence and the effectiveness of support provided to employees and report back to the Committee once complete.**

24. Statutory Dismissal Procedures - verbal update (AI 6)

Mr Jon Bell advised that a report entitled Changes to the Designated Independent Person Dismissal Procedures would be going to the Governance & Audit & Standards Committee on 26 June 2015 and then on to Full Council on 7 July 2015. He advised that the purpose of the report was to inform members of a change to the procedures that must be followed for the dismissal of designated posts (head of paid service, monitoring officer or chief finance officer) using a designated independent person and that Governance & Audit & Standards Committee would be asked to recommend to council that it amends the council's officers' employment procedure rules in Part 3D of the constitution to reflect these new procedures.

Members noted the verbal update.

25. Date of Next Scheduled Meeting (AI 9)

The next meeting is scheduled for 15 September 2015.

The meeting concluded at 1.30 pm.

Councillor Donna Jones
Chair