

# EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Thursday, 17 June 2010

|                  |             |  |                       |
|------------------|-------------|--|-----------------------|
| <u>Present:</u>  | Councillor  | A Bridson (Chair)  |                       |
|                  | Councillors | JE Green<br>S Foulkes                                    | P Davies<br>P Kearney |
| <u>Deputies</u>  | Councillors | B Kenny (for M McLaughlin)<br>R Wilkins (for M Johnston) |                       |
| <u>Apologies</u> | Councillor  | Mrs L Rennie   |                       |

## 1 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee were requested to declare whether they had an interest, either personal or prejudicial, in any item on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of such interest.

Councillors Bridson, P Davies, Foulkes, Green, Kearney and Kenny declared personal interests in minute 98 (Staffing – Metro Catering Service) by virtue of them being school governors.

## 2 MINUTES

The Committee was requested to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 30 March, 2010.

In connection with minute 78 (Workforce Monitoring Quarter 3), the Head of HR and Organisational Development reported that she had written to the Committee members on 27 April to clarify the facts on non-voluntary leavers.

**Resolved – That the minutes of the 30 March, 2010 meeting be approved.**

## 3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Committee was requested to appoint a Vice-Chair.

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, it was –

**Resolved - That Councillor M Johnston be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee.**

## 4 PEOPLE STRATEGY 2010-13

Further to minute 83 (30/3/10) the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report on the draft refreshed People Strategy 2010/13 together with an implementation plan for 2010/12.

The People Strategy's aim, which had been agreed at Cabinet on 18 March 2010 (minute 351 refers) was to ensure that Wirral Council had an effective and productive workforce to meet its current and future objectives.

It was intended to address the Council's strategic people issues by focusing attention and prioritising action within 5 key themes to best ensure that the Council:

1. Develop and deliver leadership.
2. Develop our organisation, communication and culture.
3. Develop skills, capability and capacity to deliver performance.
4. Deliver performance through an effective management framework and efficient processes.
5. Deliver our role as a good employer.

Responding to Members' comments the Head of HR and Organisational Development stated that the strategy would be monitored on a regular basis and outlined how outcomes were to be measured, this would include another employee opinion survey.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That the People Strategy 2010/13 and the People Strategy Implementation Plan 2010/11 be approved.**

**(2) That the Committee receive a monitoring report in 6 months time.**

## **5 SUBSISTENCE REIMBURSEMENTS**

The Director of Finance reported that the Committee had agreed the current reimbursement rates for subsistence expenditure on 15 June 2009 (minute 10 refers). In line with the agreed policy, the report brought forward proposals for the increase of the various limits in line with inflation. The RPI (excluding mortgage costs) showed an increase of 5.4% since the last review.

As previously stated the amounts proposed for subsistence were the maximum rates which should be evidenced by the production of valid receipts wherever reasonably possible. No reimbursement would be made where an officer had received a meal as part of the travel arrangements.

Members suggested that in the current economic climate there was a need for the Director of Finance to defer any decision on this matter.

**Resolved – That consideration of this matter be deferred pending the outcome of national pay negotiations for staff.**

## **6 IMPROVEMENTS TO KEY ISSUES EXCHANGE (KIE) 2010/11**

Further to minute 78 (30/3/10) the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which gave an update on the Key Issues Exchange (KIE) and the proposals for improvement over the next three years. As part of the proposal the report included an update on the skills audit tool with the plans to roll out, incorporated with the KIE process.

Responding to Members' comments the Head of HR and Organisational Development outlined the online KIE process which would involve the employee completing the online KIE with their line manager. The KIE was also key to the People Strategy and she acknowledged the overlap between the two. The term KIE was historic and employees were used to the terminology but she would be happy to look into this and the use of other terms such as personal development plan. There would also be a 6 monthly review which would look at actual performance.

**Resolved – That the improvements to and progress in delivering the KIE process across the organisation, be noted.**

## **7 WORKFORCE MONITORING**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report which gave a summary of the monitoring and analysis of the Council's workforce for 2009/10 (1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010) and the proposed outcomes and actions to be taken as a result. Appendices to the report fulfilled the Council's specific employment duties in relation to employment for race, gender and disability.

A Member suggested that it would be useful to have a presentation on workforce monitoring picking out key elements and linking in to the Corporate Plan. It was also suggested that it would be useful to have a geographical analysis of the data and the Head of HR and Organisational Development stated that she would be happy to report back with a postcode analysis. She also explained the use of the Council's 'Ready to Work Register' for short term contracts.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That Committee notes the requirement for the Authority to comply with specific employment duties and report upon them has been fulfilled.**

**(2) That Committee notes the findings of the Summary Report 2009/10 and approves the proposed actions.**

**(3) That progress be reported to a future meeting during 2010/11.**

**(4) That a presentation be made to the next meeting of the Committee.**

## **8 MANAGING ATTENDANCE**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report updating the Committee on the current sickness levels. In 2009/10 absence levels fell to 8.8 days per employee (provisional figures) against the figure for the year to 31 March 2009 of 10.10 days. Based upon 2008/9 end of year outturn, six of the seven departments had shown a reduction in sickness. The other department (Finance) had shown a slight increase.

The report also recommended a series of actions to improve the Council's approach to attendance management.

Responding to Members' comments the Head of HR and Organisational Development outlined some of the measures in place to help employees including the Employees' Assistance Programme and the Mindful Employer programme. She would be happy to clarify the term, 'neurological/central nervous system', one of the sickness reasons referred to in the report. She also confirmed that there was automatic referral to Occupational Health when an employee was off sick with stress.

In respect of future targets for sickness the Head of HR and Organisational Development indicated that these would be revised once the outturn position for 2009/10 was confirmed. She was seeking to obtain figures from other Merseyside authorities for benchmarking purposes and also looking at the Pricewaterhouse Coopers benchmarking club.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That Committee notes the progress on managing absence and the need to continue to proactively manage the issues across departments.**

**(2) That Committee supports the proposals to further develop the Council's approach to continuously improve performance.**

**9 APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The minutes of the Appeals Sub-Committee held on 17 and 24 March, 2010 were submitted for information.

**Resolved – That the minutes be noted.**

**10 APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management requested the Committee appoint a Chair, members and named deputies to serve on the Appeals Sub-Committee for 2010/11.

There was some discussion on the possible introduction of a pool system for membership of this Sub-Committee and also on the need for training for Members.

**Resolved –**

**(1) That an Appeals Sub-Committee of 3 Members be appointed in the ratio 1:1:1, with Councillor A Bridson appointed as Chair, for the municipal year 2010/11 comprising the following Members:**

**Councillor Mrs L Rennie**

**Deputies: Mrs S L Clarke, G Ellis, C Blakeley, A Pritchard, J Hale, T Anderson, E Boulton**

**Councillor G Davies**

**Deputies: Councillors M McLaughlin, P L Davies, H Smith, A E R Jones, B Kenny, D Roberts**

**Councillor A Bridson (Chair)**

**Deputies: M Johnston, T Harney, S A M Niblock, G D Mitchell, S Holbrook**

**(2) That a report be brought back to the Committee on the possibility of introducing a pooled system of membership and training be arranged for Members of the Sub-Committee.**

**11 EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**Resolved - That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.**

**12 UPDATE ON MANAGING WORKFORCE CHANGE AND REDEPLOYMENT**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management, submitted a report providing an update on the on-going management of Workforce Change and outlined progress to date on the successful redeployment of employees throughout the Council in support of the efficiency programme.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

**13 STAFFING - METRO CATERING SERVICE**

Further to minute 83 (30/3/10) the Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided some background on the current position in respect of staffing levels in the Metro Catering Service. The report highlighted a number of challenges which were facing the Metro Service over the coming 12 months or more.

**Resolved -**

**(1) That the report be noted.**

**(2) That the Metro Meals Service be the subject of a further report, once the outcome of the national spending reviews and the decisions regarding grant funding are known later in 2010.**

**14 EARLY VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT REQUEST**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report which sought the Committee's approval for the release of a member of his staff under the Council's Early Voluntary Retirement scheme with severance. The report gave a breakdown of the total savings over a five year period.

**Resolved – That the Early Voluntary Retirement with severance of the Strategic Service Manager, Early Years and Primary Education, within the Children's Services Department, be approved.**

15 **SEVERANCE REQUEST**

The Director of Adult Social Services submitted a report which sought the Committee's approval for the release of a member of his staff under the severance scheme. The report gave a breakdown of the total savings over a five year period.

**Resolved – That the release, under the severance scheme, of a Service Manager within the Adult Social Services Department, be approved.**

16 **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST EMPLOYEES**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management provided details of an allegation of serious or gross misconduct made against an employee and advised of the action taken.

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**