

EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 30 March 2010

Present: Councillor IO Coates (Chair)

Councillors JE Green T Harney
L Rennie

Deputies Councillor M McLaughlin (for P Davies)

75 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.

Councillor Green declared a personal interest in minute 77 (Partnership Performance Officer and Performance Support Officer Posts) by virtue of him being a member of the Local Strategic Partnership Board.

76 MINUTES

The Committee was requested to receive the minutes of the meetings held on 26 January and 16 March, 2010.

Resolved – That the minutes of the 26 January and 16 March, 2010 meetings be approved.

77 PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE OFFICER AND PERFORMANCE SUPPORT OFFICER POSTS

The Deputy Chief Executive / Director of Corporate Services submitted a report which sought the Committee's approval to extend the following existing temporarily funded posts, to support the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and delivery of Wirral's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA):

2 x full time Partnership Performance Officers, PO 6-8 (£31,754 - £36,313).

The posts would be funded until July 2011 from the remaining LAA resources.

Resolved – That this Committee approves the extension of the following fixed term posts until July 2011:

2 x full time Partnership Performance Officers, PO 6-8.

78 **WORKFORCE MONITORING QUARTER 3 REPORT (OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2009)**

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 Quarter 3 (October to December 2009) and the proposed outcomes and actions to be taken as a result. The summary report, appendix A, fulfilled the Council's specific employment duties in relation to employment for race, gender and disability.

The Head of HR and Organisational Development responded to Members' comments and gave a brief outline of the trends revealed by the statistics in the appendix. Leavers who were identified as non-voluntary could either have been at the end of a fixed term contract or employed by schools that had their own redundancy policies and she confirmed that she would clarify the facts behind this statistic to all the Committee.

The Head of HR and OD elaborated on the use of Key Issues Exchanges (KIE) and the use of an online format. Members suggested the need for cumulative totals through each quarter reporting period and the importance that should be placed on KIEs which all staff should be having and the Head of HR and OD agreed to bring a report to a future Committee on the KIEs covering the issues raised.

Resolved –

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

(2) That a report be brought to the Committee on Key Issues Exchanges.

79 **MANAGING ATTENDANCE**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management submitted a report updating the Committee on the current sickness levels. For the twelve month period up to January 2010 the sickness level for the Council was 9.07 days, down from 10.64 days in the previous comparable 12 month reporting period. The Council's target for 2009/10 was 10 days.

A list of the main causes of sickness were included together with information on the preventive care available to staff and managers. The report also outlined the ways in which the authority responded to some of the main causes of sickness.

Responding to Members' comments, the Head of HR and Organisational Development, stated that the new HR system would improve the level of data being circulated to managers so that sickness trends in particular areas could be identified at an earlier stage and actions targeted more appropriately. Take up of some initiatives, such as the Employee Assistance Programme, was very small but efforts were being taken to address this and also to raise awareness of mental health issues, the largest cause of sickness absence. Procedures in reducing sickness levels in comparable organisations such as the NHS would also be examined to see what lessons could be learnt.

The Head of HR and OD stated that she would be happy to bring a follow up report on these issues to a future meeting.

Members recognised the improvements in the reduced levels of sickness.

Resolved – That the overall improvements in sickness levels across the Council be noted and a further report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

80 **EXERCISE OF DISCRETIONARY FUNCTIONS AMENDMENT TO POLICY STATEMENT (PENSION SCHEME)**

The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management requested that the report, 'Exercise of Discretionary Functions Amendment to the Policy Statement' be withdrawn as there were some further amendments to pensions regulations which needed to be brought to Members' attention and this was agreed.

81 **APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The minutes of the Appeals Sub-Committee held on 29 January and 5 March, 2010 were submitted for information.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

82 **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 paragraphs 1 and 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.

83 **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.

Councillor Green queried the situation in respect of some staff referred to in the report as being affected by savings which had now appeared on successive agendas for a number of months. The Head of HR and Organisational Development responded and it was agreed that a further more substantive report be brought to the next Committee from the department concerned.

The Head of HR and OD elaborated on the figures of those remaining on the redeployment register and agreed to report back with a further breakdown on the redeployment issues of individual positions.

Councillor Harney referred to the People Strategy 2010/13 which had been approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on 18 March, 2010 and suggested that it should be brought to the next meeting of this Committee for consideration.

Resolved –

(1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Director of Children's Services produce a full report for the next meeting on the issue of those staff affected by savings within his department.

(3) That a report with a full breakdown of the situation of staff remaining on the redeployment register be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

(4) That the People Strategy 2010/13 be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

84 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR - EARLY VOLUNTARY RETIREMENT 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 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 a Principal Manager within the Adult Social Services Department, be approved.

85 COUNCILLOR IRIS COATES

Councillor McLaughlin expressed her thanks to Councillor Iris Coates, who was chairing her last meeting of the Committee before standing down at the May election, for having chaired the Committee with such grace over the past three years.

Councillors Green and Harney commented that their groups would also wish to be associated with these remarks and expressed their thanks to Councillor Coates.