



**Lewes District Council**  
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**Employment Committee**

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Employment Committee** held in **Warren Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes** on **15 October 2007** at **10:00** .

**Present:**

**Employer's Side:**

Councillors T M Hawthorne (Chair), B W Groves, J H Freeman, D O Rogers OBE, J H F Sheppard

**Employees' Side:**

Mr J Betteridge, Mr N Connolly, Ms L Plant, Mrs S Pattenden and Mr G Purdye

	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Minutes</b> The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
<b>11</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence/Declaration of Substitute Councillors</b> Councillor Groves declared that he was substituting for Councillor I A Nicholson. Ms L Plant declared that she was substituting for Mr S Budgen.	
<b>12</b>	<b>Smoking Progress Report</b>	

The Committee considered Report No 188/07 which reported progress against actions identified by the Committee at its last meeting. The information requested on numbers of staff and smoking breaks was provided. The Council's approach reflected accepted good practice amongst local authorities and primary care trusts. Committee members agreed that no additional action was necessary as the incidence of smoking break was low and staff and managers were content with informally agreed practices. Unison representatives noted that some staff members may additionally have given up smoking or at least refrained from smoking during the working day. The Committee noted that the Council had not yet finalised its position on the proposed ban on smoking on all Council owned land.

Resolved:

**12.1** That no further action is necessary at the present time; and

**12.2** That the Report be noted

### **13 Overtime Payments**

The Committee considered Report No 189/07 which reported progress on the review of overtime rates and sought instructions from the Committee on any subsequent steps.

The Head of Business Services reported that Unison had asked for an increased rate of overtime and options for meeting such a demand were set out in paragraph 9 of the Report. Any alteration to the present sickness scheme would need careful consideration. Any reduction in basic salary rates to pay for enhanced overtime would almost certainly meet with disapproval while there was a limit in any possible reduction in car use rates.

Some local authorities pay enhanced overtime rates while Lewes DC staff had agreed in 2002 that a single common pay scale would be instituted as part of the single status harmonisation exercise. Any change in overtime rates would not affect the single status if applied across all employees.

Resolved:

**13.1** That Unison Representatives be requested to canvass their members' interest in pursuing enhanced overtime rates; and

**13.2** That Unison Representatives be requested to communicate their members' decision to the Head of Business Services at the earliest opportunity and in any case for the next Committee meeting on 14 January 2008; and

**13.3** That the Report be noted.

#### **14 Recruitment Policy and Procedure**

Councillors considered report No 190/07 which sought agreement for a revised recruitment policy for the Council.

The Head of Business Services explained that the purpose of the Report was to put in place good practice already followed with an emphasis on how the person specification was assessed for job candidates.

In response to Councillors questions the Head of Business Services made the following points:

- There was no local authority guidance other than statutory requirements.
- The use of recruitment agencies in general was not an efficient use of Council resources. Direct recruitment obviated the need to explain job specific skills which posts demanded, the Council was aware in which job market candidates were likely to be found and the Council would in any case wish to be involved in interviewing candidates.
- The use of the internet for advertising purposes was widespread.
- While internal recruitment was encouraged where appropriate, candidates must be appointed on merit and departments in many cases wish to test the market.
- At the suggestion of Unison representatives, line 6 of paragraph 5 of the procedure was amended to read 'must also have agreed that they can be filled'.

#### Resolved:

**14.1** That the Recruitment Policy at Appendix 8 to the Report (as amended above) and the guides to job

descriptions and person specifications at Appendices B and C be adopted.

**15 Homeworking Policy**

Councillors considered Report No 191/07 which sought agreement to a new home working policy for the Council. There were at present three home workers in post.

In response to a question from Unison representatives about Contractual and Working Arrangements (paragraph 8 of the Report), the Head of Business Services stated that the Dismissal and Disciplinary Procedure was the agreed procedure to deal with formal capability issues. Although there could be no absolute guarantee, the Council would make every effort to move home workers back into Council office accommodation wherever possible if home working proved difficult.

Resolved:

**15.1** That the Home Working Policy at Appendix B to the Report be adopted.

**16 Medical Redeployment Policy**

The Committee considered Report No 192/07 which sought agreement for a new medical redeployment policy for the Council.

The Head of Business Services pointed out that nearly all the steps involved in the policy were already practised. It was best practice to have a written policy for the Council. Home working could be an option if medical redeployment was necessary.

Unison representatives welcomed the Report.

Resolved:

**16.1** That the Medical Redeployment at Appendix A to the Report be adopted.

**17**

**Flexible Retirement Policy**

Councillors considered Report No 193/07 which set out the issues arising from the new retirement category of 'flexible retirement', introduced during recent changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme, and recommended a new policy for adoption.

The Head of Business Services explained that it would in the future be possible for a retired employee to continue working for the Council.

It was not considered necessary to undertake a risk assessment on the effects of many eligible employees asking to participate in the scheme. The Council retained the power to refuse applications for flexible retirement dependent on circumstances. Lewes DC staff profile was upper age range skewed, as was the case in most local authorities. The policy might prove popular to those who wished to take the opportunity, now supported by anti-age discrimination law, to continue to work beyond the normal retirement age.

Resolved:

**17.1** That the Flexible Retirement Policy at Appendix A to the Report be adopted; and

**17.2** That the Head of Business Services be requested to bring an annual report on the take up of Flexible Retirement to the Committee.

**18**

**Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled to be held in the Warren Room, Lewes House, Lewes on 14 January 2008 at 10.00am

The meeting ended at **10:50** .

**T M Hawthorne** Chair