



Lewes District Council

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Employment Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Employment Committee** held in the **Warren Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes** on **Monday, 17 January 2011** at 10.00am.

Present:

Employer's Side:

Councillors T M Hawthorne (Chair), S B Davy, J H Freeman, J M Harrison-Hicks and D O Rogers

Employees' Side:

Mr N Cannan, Mr P Demetriou, Mrs L Plant, Mr G Purdye and Mr T Watson

Also Present:

Mr J Clark, Head of Business Services
Ms Z Downton, Committee Officer
Ms S McGreal, Unison Regional Branch Officer

Minutes

		Action
23	Minutes The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
24	Apologies for Absence/Declaration of Substitute Members An apology for absence had been received from Mrs S Harvey (Employees' Side). Councillor Davy declared that she was substituting for Councillor Sheppard who had sent an apology for absence.	
25	Investors in People The Committee considered Report No 15/11 relating to the recent Investors in People (IIP) assessment and the recommendations for future	

improvement of the Council's learning and development activities.

The Head of Business Services highlighted the main points of the Report. He explained that the IIP was a national performance standard which helped organisations to transform their business performance, primarily through concentrating on management, and learning and development activities. The assessor's report was outcome-based and concentrated on ten, high level objectives, as detailed under Section 1 of Report No 15/11.

The Council was first recognised as an Investor in People in 1996, and that had been confirmed on each subsequent re-assessment which had taken place approximately every three years. The most recent assessment took place in December 2010 and confirmed that the Council had retained the basic standard accreditation. The assessor's report was set out at Appendix A.

The Head of Business Services welcomed comments from members of the Committee and Employees' Side representatives in light of the Report and the recommendations for future improvements. The Committee regarded the comments made by staff within the assessor's report as very positive, especially in light of the current climate of economic uncertainty surrounding local authorities. Particular comments set out within the assessor's report, namely on pages 24, 27 and 28 of Report No 15/11, were cited as examples of the positive response.

The Committee noted that the Council had only sought to be assessed against the basic standard criteria but had asked for feedback on a further ten evidence requirements from the IIP's 'Your Choice' evidence criteria in order to gain information on the Council's performance in those areas. The ten extra criteria would not have been sufficient to gain a higher level recognition award, such as bronze, silver or gold, on their own. The Head of Business Services explained that the costs of being a part of the IIP scheme could increase if the Council chose to aim for a higher award than the basic standard. The Committee discussed whether there were any additional benefits of increasing the investment in order to aim for a higher level award in the future. It was concluded that, in terms of value for money and as the higher accreditation structure was relatively new, it was not deemed essential for the Council to strive for a higher level award at this stage. There would be ongoing discussions between the Head of Business Services and the assessor regarding the scope for future reviews.

In response to a councillor's question regarding the overall positive feedback from staff, the Head of Business Services explained that the Council did not choose which employees were to be interviewed by the assessor. The assessor had chosen a selection of staff, at random, from all levels of service to interview. Approximately 20-25% of the Council's employees (around 80 staff) had been interviewed as part of the assessment process.

In order to allow all representatives time to consider the Report, the Head of Business Services agreed that the Employees' Side could email any

comments to him after the meeting.

The Committee expressed its congratulations to officers and staff for the successful assessment and the feedback received.

Resolved:

25.1 That Report No 15/11 be noted; and

25.2 That the comments of the members of the Employment Committee and Employees' Side representatives, in respect of the Investors in People assessment and the recommendations, be noted.

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26 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

26.1 That, in accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of items 27 and 28 as there was likely to be disclosures of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

27 Staff Implications of Savings Target

The Head of Business Services provided an oral update to the Committee in relation to the staffing implications arising from Corporate Management Team's approach to the savings target. Informal discussions regarding the proposals had already taken place with Unison. The financial implications were currently being determined by the Director of Finance and Community Services. The Head of Business Services explained that details would be published soon and a consultation with all Council employees would take place over the following week to allow for comments. It was anticipated that a report, detailing the finalised proposals, would be presented to a meeting of the Cabinet on 9 February 2011.

The Unison Regional Branch Officer commented that it was important for staff to feel that they could influence the decisions made in order to make the consultation meaningful.

Resolved:

27.1 That the staffing proposals and timetable for the consultation, as outlined by the Head of Business Services, be noted.

28 Consideration of Matters Raised by the Employees' Side

The Employees' Side questioned whether the members of the Scrutiny Committee would be made aware of the proposals, discussed under Minute 27 above. The Chair of the Employment Committee confirmed that he would be present at the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 20

January 2011.

29 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

- 29.1** That the next meeting of the Committee to be held on Monday, 4 April 2011 at 10.00am in the Warren Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes be noted.

All to note

The meeting ended at 11.00am.

T M Hawthorne
Chair