



Lewes District Council

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Employment Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Employment Committee** held in the **Warren Room, Lewes House, Lewes** on **Monday, 11 June 2007** at 10.00am

Present:

Employer's Side:

Councillors T M Hawthorne (Chair), J H Freeman, I A Nicholson, D O Rogers OBE

Employees' Side:

Mr J Betteridge, Ms L Divall, Mrs S Pattenden and Mr G Purdye

Minutes

Action

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2 Apologies for Absence/Declaration of Substitute Member

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor H J F Sheppard and from Mr Budgen and Mr Connolly. Ms Divall declared that she was substituting for Mr Connolly.

Councillor Freeman declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the Agenda items as Mr Purdye was a personal acquaintance. Councillor Nicholson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in item 4 below – Car Loans as he possessed a vehicle with emission levels above those described in that report.

3 Health Act 2006 – Smoke Free Premises and Vehicles

The Committee considered Report No 109/07 which sought the Committee's and UNISON's views on the Council resolution regarding further smoking restrictions.

Action

Mrs Pattenden made the following points:

- Waste and Recycling staff were largely unsupportive of restrictions on smoking beyond those statutorily imposed;
- The goodwill of smokers could be lost, smokers would still smoke off-site and those who smoked needed breaks to do so, as did other staff for other purposes;
- The time taken for smoking breaks was made up at other times;
- Managers would be unable to enforce additional restrictions;
- Office based staff did not have the same opportunity for smoking breaks as those working from Council vehicles;
- Non-smokers largely supported the rights of smokers;
- Full consultation with Robinson Road and all other staff was desirable;
- Staff whose responsibility included visiting properties where clients were smoking, issues raised by Environmental Health, Pest Control and Housing Officers in particular, would like to be supported by management in not having to work under such conditions.

In discussion the following points were raised:

- While it was possible to proceed by proposing no further action, the Council had expressed a desire to go beyond the legislation in working towards a smoke free district despite the practical difficulties of dealing with entrenched attitudes and addictive behaviour;
- There was existing support in conjunction with local health services to give up smoking;
- Councillors should set an example with regard to smoking breaks;
- Vehicles used by more than one employee would be smoke free;
- It was desirable that any rule applied to all departments.
- It was difficult to assess overall health benefits against any stress relief afforded by smoking;
- Health and safety at work issues with regard to smoking near flammable material had already been addressed.

Action

The following issues needed further attention:

- Any enforcement of no smoking on Council owned land against off-duty staff or the public;
- Spent smoking materials as litter;
- Staff smokers using the curtilage of Council owned buildings.

Resolved:

- 3.1** That the Head of Business Services be requested to bring a Report to the October meetings of the Committee and the Cabinet including information on:
- (a) the extent and frequency of smoking breaks by staff;
 - (b) whether management could support staff refusing to work with clients on premises where smoking was taking place; and
 - (c) the position of other local authorities on this matter, to be informed by Local Government Association information and the "Smoke Free England" website.

HBS

4 Car Loans

The Committee considered Report No 110/07 which sought to amend the Council's car loan policy so that carbon dioxide emissions were included as a constraint for the first time.

The Committee agreed that councillors and staff not participating in the car loan scheme could themselves set a good example by using vehicles with maximum emission rates below the maximum recommended.

Resolved:

- 4.1** That the Council's car loan scheme be amended so that loans will in future only be given on new cars with the same maximum emission rate as applied to the contracts hire fleet at the time; and
- 4.2** That the maximum emission rate for used cars bought with a car loan should be set at 10 grams per kilometre more than the emission rate applied to the contract hire car fleet at that time.

HBS

Action

5 Councillors' Training Requirements

The Committee considered Report No 111/07 which allowed the meeting to identify any training needs for the coming year. The Head of Business Services pointed out that this standard report was brought to each Committee at its first meeting of the new municipal year. Individual councillors could raise training requirements with Personnel Officers. Councillors expressed an interest in hearing from UNISON with regard to on-going matters for discussion and on the legal basis of employment law.

Resolved:

- 5.1** That the Head of Business Services be requested to provide a briefing session with regard to the Council's Appeal Procedure; and
- 5.2** That councillors with requests for specific training matters to be addressed immediately prior to forthcoming Employment Committee meetings be requested to notify the Head of Business Services or the Committee Officer no later than two weeks before the scheduled date of a meeting.

HBS

6 Exclusion of the PublicResolved:

- 6.1** That in accordance with Section 100A for the Local Government Act 1972 as amended the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following items as there were likely to be disclosures of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 (item 7 below) and 4 (item 8 below) respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

7 Public and Media Communications

The Committee considered Report No 112/07 which proposed a change in the staffing of the Public Consultation and Press Office to give additional resources to manage the Council's website and provide an appropriate level of cover in the absence of the Public Consultation and Press Officer.

The Head of Business Services pointed out that it was unusual for a redundancy to occur within the Council's staff. The redundancy of the current part-time post holder had been fully discussed with the post holder and with UNISON representatives. The post holder reluctantly accepted the inevitability of the redundancy and that no appropriate redeployment was available.

	Action
<p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>7.1 That a new full-time post of Information Officer be created;</p> <p>7.2 That the post DEM022 – Press Assistant (part-time) be made redundant;</p> <p>7.3 That the post DEM 0016 - Councillor Services Officer currently vacant be deleted; and</p> <p>7.4 That the post DEM 023 - Admin Assistant currently vacant be deleted.</p>	HBS
<p>8 Overtime Rates</p> <p>UNISON representatives stated that employees for some time had been paid generally at flat rate as agreed by staff in the past as part of the harmonisation process. The Employee's Side (including the whole of the Waste Section) had asked that that policy be reviewed.</p> <p>The Head of Business Services suggested that the cost of overtime were paid at (say) time and a half there would be a significant additional on-going cost. That cost would have to be met by savings elsewhere and any investigation into the proposal may have to include looking at the current sickness scheme or the car mileage scheme.</p> <p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>8.1 That the Head of Business Services be requested to research the financial implications of a review of overtime rate and to bring such information to the Committee in the future.</p>	HBS
<p>9 Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Committee was scheduled to be held in the Warren Room, Lewes House on 15 October 2007 at 10.00am.</p>	

The meeting ended at 11.10am

T M Hawthorne
Chair