



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, 8 June 2009** at 10.00am.

Present:

Employer's Side:

Councillors T M Hawthorne (Chair), J H Freeman and D O Rogers

Employees' Side:

Mr M Connolly, Mr P Demetriou, Mr G Purdye and Mrs L Plant

Also Present:

Mr J Clark, Head of Business Services

Ms J Gavigan, Committee Officer/Equalities Co-ordinator

Ms J Klemenz, Personnel Officer

Minutes

Action

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2 Apologies for Absence/Declaration of Substitute Members

An apology for absence was given on behalf of Mr J Betteridge.

3 Equal Pay Audit Progress

The Committee received Report No 104/09 relating to progress on the Equal Pay Audit action plan. The Report showed that there had been some improvement in closing the gender pay gap since the Equal Pay Audit was conducted in January 2006.

The Head of Business Services informed the Committee that the Council was due to carry out another full audit as it had been three years since the last one was conducted.

Resolved:

- 3.1** That the Head of Business Services present an updated Equal Pay Audit and report thereon to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- 3.2** That Report No 104/09 be noted.

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4 Car Allowances and Contract Hire Car Scheme

The Committee considered Report No 105/09 relating to proposed changes to the contract hire car scheme. The Head of Business Services reported that the scheme was used to provide a car to high mileage users or to those posts where the addition of a car helped with the recruitment and retention of those staff. Due to the increasing number of eligible part-time staff, those on flexible retirement and part-time staff at higher grades, changes to the scheme were now necessary to enable part-time staff to join.

An employees' side representative added that the proposal to include part-time workers in the scheme was a positive one as it would help to make those staff feel more valued.

Resolved:

- 4.1** That the contract hire car scheme be amended so that eligible part-time staff can have a rental allowance proportionate to their part-time hours; and
- 4.2** That existing part-time staff with cars on the scheme, or existing full-time staff who reduce their hours, can retain the full rental allowance until such time as the car is replaced, when the appropriate part-time allowance would be given.

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5 Disciplinary Procedure

The Committee considered Report No 106/09 relating to proposed changes to the Council's Disciplinary Procedure. The Head of Business Services explained that, although the existing procedure complied with the main points of the statutory Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) code of practice, improvements could be made to help everyone understand procedures more fully and to update cross-references to other related policies. These changes would be made and the Committee's agreement sought at the next meeting.

The Head of Business Services reported that, in the meantime, there were two aspects of the procedure which the Committee needed to consider amending for the sake of clarity. These matters related to removing reference to redundancy dismissals or the non-renewal of fixed term contracts on their expiry, as these did not apply under the procedure, and the carrying out of investigations prior to disciplinary hearings being held.

Resolved:

5.1 That the Head of Business Services be authorised to make changes to the Council's Disciplinary Procedure to:

- (a) Remove references to redundancy dismissals or the non-renewal of fixed term contracts on their expiry;
- (b) Make clear the use of investigations and investigatory meetings: and

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5.2 That the whole Disciplinary Procedure be reviewed and presented to the next meeting of the Committee for approval.

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6 Staff Survey 2009

The Committee considered Report No 107/09 relating to the results of the Staff Survey carried out in March 2009 and councillors and employee representatives' views were sought on any subsequent action that was needed.

The Head of Business Services stated that more specific questions had been included in the survey this year to elicit more information around issues. Results and comments were considered within each department at team meetings. Corporate Management Team then decided on any improvements to be made as a direct result of the survey.

In the course of the Committee's discussion of the survey results, the following points were made:

- Some individuals who had made comments may be reluctant to identify themselves at team meetings.
- Response rates to the survey varied between departments despite efforts to encourage replies via letters to staff, posters, UNISON etc.
- Issues around inadequate cleaning in offices had been raised with the contractor.
- Finding an acceptable level of heating in offices was difficult as comfortable temperatures varied from person to person.

- Some of the refurbishment requirements for Southover House could be met via existing budgets for office furniture and building improvements.
- Staff awareness of equalities issues had shown an improvement.

Resolved:

- 6.1** That the Head of Business Services be requested to update on progress with the areas raised by the Committee concerning cleaning at its next meeting.

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7 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 12 October 2009 at 10.00am in the Warren Room, Lewes House, 32 High Street, Lewes.

ALL TO
NOTE

The meeting ended at 10.30am.

T M Hawthorne
Chair