

Employment Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Employment Committee** held in the **Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes on Monday, 14 September 2015** at 10.00am.

Present:

Employer's Side:

Councillors T Nicholson (Chair), E Merry, P Franklin and S Gauntlett

Employees' Side:

Mr G Purdye and Mrs S Harvey

Also Present:

Ms M Frost, Committee Officer

Ms H Knight, Human Resources Manager

Ms B Cooke, Head of Organisational Development

Ms R Wynn, Environmental Health -- Health and Safety Officer

Minutes

7 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

8 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Lambert and Ms J Yeates, Health and Safety Officer.

9 Close Personal Relationships Policy

The Committee received Report No 105/15 which updated the Council's Human Resources (HR) policy on Personal Relationships at Work and which sought the Committee's agreement to the implementation of the revised policy within the organisation.

The revised policy was intended to eliminate any possible perceptions or accusations of bias, favoritism or prejudice towards those who may have a close personal relationship at the Council. The policy would protect the

Action

employee from potential allegations of bias or prejudice.

The Employees' Side requested clarification on why Corporate Management Team (CMT) had to sign off all forms in relation to this policy and why the policy was being introduced at this particular time.

The Head of Organisational Development explained that all HR policies were subject to a programme of review. The policy stated that CMT signed off all completed forms with regard to close personal relationships at work because it could take a strategic perspective and would be better sited to recognise any strategic impact a close personal relationship may have on the organisation.

The Employees' Side informed the Committee that they did not support the implementation of this revised policy.

Resolved:

- 9.1 That Report No 105/15 be noted; and
- 9.2 That it be agreed to implement the revised Close Personal Relationships policy.

10 Immunisations

The Committee received Report No 106/15 which sought to clarify why immunisations were not offered across the Council rather than exclusively to the Waste and Recycling teams.

The Committee noted that currently the Council offered HepB, Tetanus and Weils disease vaccinations to all staff in the Waste and Recycling department. For those staff the risk of infection had been identified as high so this precaution was taken alongside personal protective equipment and training. With regard to staff across the whole organisation, it depended on the risk that had been identified in the Safe Systems of Work and Risk Assessments. The offer of immunisations had always been open to other staff in the Council where a risk of infection had been identified.

The Employees' Side sought clarification about whether, once a risk had been identified, if it was voluntary to have the immunisation and if not taken up, whether staff had to sign a disclaimer.

The Human Resources Manager agreed to report back to the next meeting of the Committee about whether staff were required to sign a disclaimer.

The Employees' Side also suggested that staff should be reminded via LDC News that immunisations were available.

Resolved:

Head of
Organisatio
nal Change

HR
Manager

- 10.1 That Report No 106/15 be noted; and
- 10.2 That the Report had been written following professional specialist advice from the Council's Health and Safety Officer and appointed Occupational Health Advisor be noted.

11 Revised HR Policies

The Committee considered Report No 107/15 which updated the Council's HR Policies specifically relating to whistleblowing, anti- fraud and corruption.

The Employees' Side informed the Committee that, in contradiction with what was stated within the Report, Unison had made comments on the revised policies and requested that the Head of Organisational Development check to make sure any comments received had been incorporated.

The Committee requested that information regarding the revised policies should be reported in the Members First newsletter.

HR
Manager

Resolved :

- 11.1 That Report No 107/15 be noted; and
- 11.2 That the implementation of the revised policies relating to whistleblowing, anti-fraud and corruption be agreed subject to any comments being incorporated from the Employees' Side.

12 Shared Parental Leave Policy

The Committee considered Report No 108/15 which sought to implement a new policy written by the HR department regarding Shared Parental Leave. In April 2015 the Government introduced new legislation regarding Shared Parental Leave. Since that date, the HR department had published information regarding this on the Council's intranet for staff. The legislative changes had been incorporated into this new policy.

The Committee noted that this was a complex area and a very new piece of legislation. As a result there had not been any interest in taking up the shared leave as yet. As parents became more aware of the option available to them, it was necessary to have a policy in place.

Resolved:

- 12.1 That Report No 108/15 be noted.

13 Sickness Report

The Committee received Report No 108/16 which presented the staff sickness

statistics from 1 April 2015 to 30 June 2015.

During 2014/15 there had been 47 separate instances of long term absence. 12 of those were for musculoskeletal illness. The most common cause of short term absence included musculoskeletal illness, stomach or bowel disorder and cold/flu. The majority of days lost to sickness absence were in the Waste and Recycling department.

A recent survey with HR colleagues on the Sussex Strategic HR Group revealed that the Council had a higher number of days lost than our neighbouring authorities. The Employees' Side suggested that some of our neighbours may not have Waste and Recycling departments and that it would be more appropriate if HR undertook a survey with other Councils who have the same remit as Lewes District Council in order that the comparison could be more meaningful. The HR Manager agreed to undertake a further survey on days lost with Councils who had a similar structure and to report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

HR
Manager

Resolved:

13.1 That Report No 108/16 be noted.

14 Accidents to Staff from April to August 2015

The Committee received Report No 113/15 which detailed statistics on the accidents reported between 1 April 2015 and 25 August 2015.

There had been 27 accidents from April to August 2015 and a breakdown of data and statistics on those accidents were set out under paragraphs 2 – 2.11 of the Report.

Resolved:

14.1 That Report No 113/15 be noted.

15 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

15.1 That in accordance with Section 11(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of items 17 and 18 on the Agenda as there was likely to be disclosures of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1,2 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Act.

16 Consideration of Matters raised by the Employees Side

The Employees' Side commented that due to the pressure of organisational change taking place, more was needed to support staff. The Employees' Side

suggested that there was a need for a collection of policies to assist staff with coping with the change and also the pace of change. A timetable of changes coming forward was also needed. The Employees' Side also suggested that when an experienced member of staff leaves more should be done to ensure that they exit is a planned way and their expertise and knowledge is passed on to the remaining employees and departments. The HR Manager advised the Committee that a staff transfer form was now in place and completed when a member of staff left in order to ensure all their knowledge remained with the organisation.

The HR Manager also informed the Committee that there was a comprehensive Restructure and Redeployment policy in place which the Employment Committee had agreed eighteen months ago. The Human Resources department would not look at these policies again until next year.

Resolved:

16.1 That the matters raised by the Employees' Side be noted.

17 Consideration of Health and Safety matters Raised by the Employees' Side

The Employees' Side sought clarification as to why there was not a health and safety report on the agenda. The Committee noted that this was an oversight for this meeting and that there would be a report on the next agenda.

HR
Manager

Resolved:

17.1 That a report on health and safety matters would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee

18 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

18.1 That the next meeting of the Employment Committee that is provisionally scheduled to be held on Monday, 7 December 2015 at 10.00am in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Lewes be noted.

All to note

The meeting ended at 10.55am

T Nicholson
Chair