



Employment Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Employment Committee** held in the **Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Monday, 7 December 2015** at 10.00am.

Present:

Employer's Side:

Councillors J Peterson (Chair), E Merry, P Franklin and S Gauntlett

Employees' Side:

Mr M Busby
Ms S McGreal
Mrs L Plant
Mr G Purdye

Also Present:

Ms B Cooke, Head of Organisational Development
Ms M Frost, Committee Officer
Mrs J Yeates, Environmental Health – Health and Safety Officer

Minutes

19 Appointment of Committee Member

Resolved:

- 19.1 That the appointment of Councillor J Peterson as a member of the Employment Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2016/2016 be noted.

Action

20 Election of ChairResolved:

- 20.1 That the election of Councillor J Peterson as Chair of the Employment Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2015/2016 be noted.

21 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

22 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Lambert and Helen Knight, Human Resources Manager.

23 Updated Code of Conduct Policy

The Committee considered Report No 174/15 which updated the Council's Code of Conduct for Employees' policy. The Head of Organisational Development reported that there had been very little change to the content of the policy. The document had been reformatted and terminology within the document had been updated in line with current practices.

The Employees' side recognised that little change had been made to the document, but noted that the policy should be dated December 2015 rather than August 2015.

Resolved :

- 23.1 That Report No 174/15 be agreed; and
- 23.2 That it be recommended to Cabinet and Full Council that the updated Code of Conduct for Employees' policy be implemented, as set out in Report No 174/15.

24 Sickness Report

The Committee considered Report No 175/15 which set out the staff sickness statistics from 1 July 2015 to 30 September 2015.

HOD

Sickness absence for quarter two at the Council had increased, partly due to the number of long term absence cases. Overall, long term sickness represented 67% of the total absence. The Head of Organisational Development reported that the sickness levels at the Council were higher than at neighboring authorities and in view of this the Council's Sickness policy was being reviewed.

The policy needed to have clearer guidelines around managing absence, particularly long term cases. Consideration would be given to bringing the trigger levels into line with other authorities. At the moment absence management at the Council was only triggered after fifteen days sickness and this was considered too long by the Corporate Management Team.

Unison would be fully consulted on any revisions to the policy and a draft would be submitted to a future meeting of the Employment Committee.

Resolved:

24.1 That Report No 175/15 be agreed.

HOD

25 Accidents to Staff from April to October 2015

The Committee received Report No 176/15 which detailed statistics on the accidents to staff reported between 1 April 2015 and 31 October 2015.

There had been 41 accidents from April to October 2015. April, June and October had the highest number of accidents and a breakdown of those accidents were set out under the graphs within the Report on pages 26 to 32.

The Health and Safety Officer reported that the Council had requested that staff also report near misses and up to 31 October 2015 four near misses had been reported. The majority of accidents could be attributed to manual handling accidents or accidents due to ergonomic reasons, for example, muscle strain when lifting a heavy box or misjudging the width of a doorway.

The Committee discussed accidents at work resulting from dog bites and although rare, Councillors asked that members of staff be encouraged to report such instances formally to line managers and to the Police.

Resolved:

25.1 That Report No 176/15 be noted.

26 Joint Health and Safety Forum activities from January to November 2015

The Committee received Report No 177/15 which set out the main activities of the Joint Health and Safety Forum from January 2015 to November 2015.

The Joint Health and Safety Forum met monthly and discussed health and safety matters within the Council. It was chaired by the Director of Service Delivery and administered by the Health and Safety Officer. Members of Unison attended and represented all members of staff, not just Unison members.

The Forum had tackled many issues over the last eleven months including reviewing the Health and Safety Policy, introducing an audit process for health and safety, reviewing the Council's Portable Appliance Testing, reviewing the Asbestos policy and ensuring risk assessments were updated. The Forum also considered the accident and near miss reports at every meeting.

The Committee acknowledged the amount of work the Forum had undertaken and noted that the Forum would now be meeting bi monthly in the future.

Resolved:

26.1 That Report No 177/15 be noted.

27 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

27.1 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 12A of the Act.

28 Consideration of Matters raised by the Employees Side

The Employees' side commented that there were ongoing discussions with the Human Resources department concerning shared services. Councillor Merry indicated that the shared services programme was within her Cabinet portfolio and she reassured the Employees' side that it would be fully consulted throughout the process. It was the Council's intention to carefully work through the

shared services programme, ensuring the best possible outcome for staff and services.

The Employees' side reported that they were looking at the Council's suite of policies which dealt with organisational change with the aim of ensuring that they could be used as an effective toolkit by managers throughout this period of change. The Employees' side also suggested that communication with staff had not been as effective as it should be concerning changes for shared services and that communication needed to be more fluid and clearer to staff. The Head of Organisational Change reassured the Committee that regular joint newsletters would be issued to staff members at Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council simultaneously to ensure that they were disseminated at the same time.

HOD

Resolved:

28.1 That the matters raised by the Employees' side be noted.

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

The Employees' side reminded the Committee that the Council's Asbestos policy was currently under review and would be considered at the next meeting of the Joint Health and Safety Forum.

Resolved:

29.1 That the Health and Safety matters raised by the Employees' side be noted.

30 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

30.1 That the next meeting of the Employment Committee that is scheduled to be held on Monday, 7 March 2016 at 10.00am in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Lewes be noted.

All to note

The meeting ended at 10.40am

J Peterson
Chair