



Employment Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Employment Committee** held in the **Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Monday, 7 March 2016** at 10.00am.

Present:

Employer's Side:

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

Employees' Side:

Ms S Harvey

Mr G Purdye

Also Present:

Ms B Cooke, Head of Organisational Development

Ms H Knight, Human Resources Manager

Ms M Frost, Committee Officer

Mrs J Yeates, Health and Safety Officer

Minutes

31 Appointment of Committee Member

Resolved:

31.1 That the appointment of Councillor M Chartier as a member of the Employment Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2015/16 be noted.

32 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

33 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Gauntlett and Ms L Plant (Employees' Side).

34 Sickness Report

The Committee considered Report No 42/16 which set out the staff sickness statistics from 1 October to 31 December 2015.

The data for the sickness absence statistics for quarter 3 of 2015/16 had been presented with the new service area headings which meant direct comparison with service area levels of absence from quarter 2 was not possible, but the Committee noted that sickness absence for quarter 3 at the Council had increased from quarter 2. The Committee also noted that historically, quarter 3 tended to be a higher quarter with an increase in absences for cold and flu illnesses during the winter period.

Overall long term sickness represented 64% of the total absence figure in quarter 3 which was a reduction from 68% in quarter 2. Short term absence made up 36% of the total which was a slight increase from 32% in the last quarter.

Reasons for absence in quarter 3 were varied and included common cold, flu, musculoskeletal problems and stomach or bowel disorders. The increase in quarter 3 meant that the Council had exceeded its target of 9 days for 2015/16.

Councillor Merry reported that sickness absence fell within her portfolio remit as a Cabinet Member and that the increase in sickness levels was being carefully monitored and reviewed. It was suggested that the management of sickness needed to be more flexible allowing where possible, for people to work agilely and work from home if too unwell to attend the office.

The Head of Organisational Development noted that the short term absence figures needed a slight amendment with regard to the figures concerning depression and that she would send an updated version of the figures to the Employment Committee.

The Council's sickness management policy was under review and would be circulated for comment in due course. Unison would be fully consulted about any revisions to the policy and a draft would be

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submitted to a future meeting of the Employment Committee.

Resolved :

34.1 That Report No 42/16 be noted.

35 Accidents to Staff

The Committee considered Report No 43/16 which detailed statistics on the accidents to staff reported between 1 April 2015 and 31 January 2016.

There had been 55 accidents from April 2015 to January 2016. April, June and October had the highest number of accidents and a breakdown of those accidents was set out under the graphs within the Report on pages 15 to 20. Last year there were 65 accidents from April 2014 to January 2015 and the highest number of accidents had been in April, June and October which highlighted a pattern. The Health and Safety Officer would look in more detail to see if there was an obvious reason for the pattern and would report back to the Employment Committee.

The Committee noted that if there was a serious injury or if an individual was off work for 7 days or more, the accident had to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive under reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR). This year the Council had reported two fractures and five reports for people being off for seven or more days.

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The Committee also noted that staff were encouraged to report near misses. The Council was running a near miss campaign to encourage staff to report them. There had been 7 near misses reported in February 2016.

A Councillor suggested that there should be a public awareness article in the District News newsletter to encourage people to slow down when passing refuse vehicles that were in use on roads. Workers in the Waste & Recycling team were often at great risk due to having to cross back and forth across busy roads. The Committee noted that the Council was currently looking into safe systems of work and risk assessments for every type of road used by the Council.

Resolved:

35.1 That Report No 43/16 be noted.

36 Exclusion of the Public and PressResolved:

- 36.1 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.

37 Consideration of Matters raised by the Employees Side

The Employees' side commented that it was awaiting the formal business case for the Joint Transformation Programme and was liaising closely with Eastbourne Borough Council colleagues. The Employees' side reported that the Lewes and Eastbourne Unison branches were convening to discuss a possible merger. The two Branches were committed to playing a full and constructive part in the transformation programme.

Resolved:

- 37.1 That the matters raised by the Employees' side be noted.

38 Date of Next MeetingResolved:

- 38.1 That the next meeting of the Employment Committee that is scheduled to be held on Monday, 13 June 2016 at 10.00am in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Lewes be noted.

All to note

The meeting ended at 10.42am

J Peterson
Chair