

Employment Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Employment Committee** held in the **Ditchling Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes** on **Monday, 6 March 2017** at 10.00am

Present:

Employer's Side:

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

Employees' Side:

Mrs L Plant

Also Present:

Ms Z Downton, Committee Officer
 Mrs H Knight, Head of HR
 Ms S McGreal, Regional Organiser, Unison
 Ms A Robins, HR Business Partner
 Ms J Yeates, Health and Safety Officer

Minutes

31 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor M Chartier (Employer's Side) and Mr G Purdye (Employees' Side).

33 Update on the Joint Transformation Programme

The Chair invited the Head of HR to provide a verbal update on the progress of the Joint Transformation Programme (JTP); a restructuring programme which aimed to deliver the majority of Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough

Action

Councils' services via shared teams and by adopting new ways of working.

The Head of HR highlighted the key progress points, as follows:

- The formal consultation with staff and Unison on Phase One of the JTP had begun in January 2017. A third and final consultation pack had been issued on 24 February 2017. The large amount of feedback received was responded to through various channels including workshops, direct to individuals or as answers to the Frequently Asked Questions section posted on the JTP Communications Hub (located on the Council's intranet site).
- The submission deadline for applications/expressions of interests for roles in Phase One was 3 March 2017.
- The Council had received 14 applications for voluntary redundancy. Those staff had been notified of the outcome by 24 February 2017.
- Shortlisting commenced on 6 March 2017. Individuals would be notified on 15 March 2017 as to whether they had been selected to be interviewed. Interviews were set to take place between 20 March 2017 and 31 March 2017.

Ms McGreal, Regional Organiser, Unison, explained that Unison had submitted a collective response to the Phase One staff consultation pack (issues one and two). She drew to the Committee's attention the following points from that response:

- Unison welcomed the implementation of the slotting-in proposals that it had highlighted.
- Unison understood that the procedures for slotting-in and ring fencing would be reviewed for Phase Two of the JTP.
- Unison had requested to see a copy of the JTP Frequently Asked Questions relating to the Phase One consultation (located on the Council's intranet site) to accompany the Council's formal answer to Unison's collective response.
- Unison believed that there had been a breach of the Change Management Policy, a policy which had been approved by the Committee at its meeting in December 2016. The suggested breach referred to a failure by the Council to provide the names of affected staff to Unison. Ms McGreal stated that the Assistant Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development had explained to Unison that the Council had received feedback from staff who were not members of Unison that they had not wanted their names to be passed on to Unison. Ms McGreal informed the Committee that Unison would only use such information sensitively and would not publish or use it inappropriately.
- Unison was awaiting a detailed response to the concerns raised in respect of TUPE and the implementation of Eastbourne Borough

Council as the sole employer of staff across both Councils.

- Unison had requested more information about the Resilience Training sessions that had been offered to staff. Unison had expressed concern that the title of the training sent out a negative message that staff would need to be resilient. The Head of HR explained to the Committee that all staff, not just those 'in scope', had been asked to signal their interest in the training course which had run before. She added that at that point staff had been given full details of the content of the course. Four sessions had been filled and would be held across both Council sites in Lewes and Eastbourne. Feedback would be sought from attendees.

The Committee noted that Unison was awaiting a formal response from the Council in respect of the matters raised. The Head of HR would circulate the full response from Unison to the JTP consultation and the Council's response to Unison, once available, to members of the Committee for information.

Head
of HR

Resolved:

- 33.1** That the Head of HR be requested to provide an update report on the progress of the Joint Transformation Programme to each meeting of the Employment Committee, until further notice.

Head
of HR

34 Sickiness Report

The Committee received Report No 47/17 which provided an update regarding the Council's sickness figures for the period 1 October 2016 to 31 December 2016 (Quarter 3 of 2016/2017).

The average number of days' absence per employee for Quarter 3 was 2.7. The Head of HR explained, under paragraph 2.2 of the Report, that although that number was an increase from Quarter 2, it was an improvement on previous years for the reporting period.

The Head of HR drew to the Committee's attention, as detailed under paragraph 2.5, that the new Attendance Management Policy continued to be applied consistently across Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils and would be reviewed, as requested by Unison, in June or July 2017.

Appendix 1 of the Report set out the Council's sickness figures for Quarter 3. The reasons for absence during Quarter 3 were shown by service area under Appendix 2.

Resolved:

- 34.1** That Report No 47/17 be noted.

35 Accidents to staff from April 2016 to February 2017

The Committee received Report No 48/17 which presented the statistics on accidents and near misses reported by staff at the Council between 1 April 2016 and 10 February 2017.

The Committee noted that 34 accidents had been reported, compared to 64 in

the same period last year. The Health and Safety Officer explained that there had been a reduction in accidents in the Waste Services team, which she hoped did not reflect a decrease in reporting.

Ms McGreal, Regional Organiser, Unison, stated that a reduction in accidents was good news and demonstrated that raising awareness of health and safety mattered.

The Health and Safety Officer highlighted that there had been a slight increase in the number of accidents caused by sharp objects, such as cuts and needle stick incidents. The Committee discussed the issues of the irresponsible disposal of needle waste and the risk to Waste Services staff during their collection rounds. In response to a councillor's query, the Health and Safety Officer confirmed that mandatory manual handling training was run annually for Waste Services staff. The Committee was informed by a councillor that the Council was developing a new waste strategy that would consider ways to reduce handling of waste and eliminate the risks to staff, for example by possibly introducing bins for household waste.

Details of near misses reported by staff were set out in paragraph 2.7 of the Report.

Resolved:

- 35.1** That Report No 48/17 be noted.

36 Exclusion of the Public and Press

Resolved:

- 36.1** That, in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of items 8 and 9 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

Ms McGreal, Regional Organiser, Unison, requested that a record of thanks be extended to Sue Harvey, outgoing Unison Branch Secretary and former employee of the Council, for her hard work and dedication as Branch Secretary.

Ms McGreal informed the Committee that it had been agreed that the Eastbourne and Lewes branches of Unison would be formally merged later in 2017.

In response to a query by Ms McGreal on the future of the Employment Committee in light of the Joint Transformation Programme, the Committee Officer explained that the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services and Head of Democratic Services were considering the matter. The Committee Officer explained further that proposals would be brought to a meeting of the

Committee as soon as was practicable.

38 Consideration of Health and Safety Matters Raised by the Employees' Side

There were no additional health and safety matters raised by the Employees' Side over and above those which had been recorded in the Minutes of the meeting of the Employment Committee.

The Health and Safety Officer requested that a record of thanks be extended to Sue Harvey, outgoing Unison Branch Secretary and former employee of the Council, for her contribution to raising awareness of health and safety at the Council.

39 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

- 39.1** That it be noted that the next meeting of the Employment Committee was scheduled to be held on Monday, 12 June 2017 in the Telscombe Room, Southover House, Southover Road, Lewes commencing at 10:00am.

All to
note

The meeting ended at 10:50am.

J Peterson
Chair