

## EMPLOYEES CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

10.00 am, Monday 18 February, 2013

**Present:-** Councillor John Taylor – in the Chair

Councillors Mrs Hambleton, Plant, Sweeney and Turner

**Employee representatives:-** Paul Pickerill (GMB/Apex) (Employees' Side Chair), Andy Cowden (GMB/Apex), Kim Graham (Unison) and Gary Morgan (GMB/Apex)

**Officers:-** Richard Durrant (Head of Human Resources), Roger Tait (Head of Operations) (left after item 6), Paul Washington (Principal Solicitor), Sarah Taylor (Human Resources Officer (Workforce Development)) and Nick Lamper (Senior Member Services Officer)

### 1. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

**Resolved:** That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of items 5 to 10 inclusive as there would be likely to be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Elizabeth Shenton, Jackie Cicatello (Unison) and Phil Bartels (GMB/Apex).

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Paul Pickerill (GMB/Apex) declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of item number 6 (Night Working Rates Proposal) by reason of his employment and withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of the item.

### 4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

### 5. ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

A report was submitted to update the committee on progress in relation to attendance management, along with an indicative breakdown of conditions resulting in long-term sickness absences of 20 working days or more.

Richard Durrant, Head of Human Resources, advised that a downward trend in absences in January had resulted in a new projected outturn for the year of 8.04 days per employee, and that it was possible if the trend continued that the figure may drop below 8.00 at year end.

**Resolved:** That the progress made be noted.

### 6. NIGHT WORKING RATES PROPOSAL

(Paul Pickerill (GMB/Apex) declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of this item by reason of his employment and withdrew from the meeting during the consideration of the item.)

A report was submitted seeking the committee's views on the level of pay enhancements to be paid to employees working at night on an occasional voluntary basis.

Following a meeting between the chair, the Head of Human Resources and the trade unions to discuss officers' initial proposal of time-and-a-third on 28 January, the unions had put forward a proposal for payment of time-and-a-third plus time off in lieu for all-night working.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That acceptance of the trade unions' proposal as set out in the report be recommended to the Staffing Committee;
- (2) That a further report on the operation of any proposals implemented be submitted in due course, with particular reference to their application to A500 night work cleansing operations.

**7. INFORMATION SECURITY POLICIES**

A report was submitted to advise the committee of any employee-related issues arising from the annual review of the council's information security policies and a new Data Transfer Policy and Procedure, along with a summary of amendments made to the policy suite following a recent external review of Payment Card Industry compliance.

The amendments had been discussed with the trade unions, who had raised no objections.

The draft Data Transfer Policy and Procedure had also been the subject of consultation with the unions, who had requested some minor amendments, which were set out in the report. It was proposed that section 6.1 as drafted be amended to address the unions' concerns, and the proposed revised wording was set out in the report.

**Resolved:** That the proposed action be endorsed.

**8. RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND INDUCTION POLICY**

A report was submitted seeking the committee's view on a Recruitment, Selection and Induction Policy to replace the current Recruitment, Selection and Induction Code of Practice.

The draft policy had been discussed with the trade unions at a meeting on 29 January, and the unions had been generally supportive of it, but would have preferred the reference to 'suitable' internal candidates to have been replaced with 'candidates who, although unable to undertake the full duties of a post applied for, may be able to do so following appropriate training'.

It was explained, however, that although there may be occasions when an appointment could be made where a candidate was not immediately capable of

carrying out the full range of duties but may be able to do so in time with sufficient training and support, there would also be occasions where it was essential for service continuity that the full range of duties were carried out from the first day of appointment and/or that the cost/time required for relevant training would be impracticable or uneconomic, and this would need to be taken into account when appointment decisions were being considered on a case by case basis.

Under the terms of the policy, internal candidates would have the right to challenge appointment decisions via the Grievance Procedure.

**Resolved:** That the proposed policy be endorsed.

## 9. **LIVING WAGE INITIATIVE**

A report was submitted in relation to progress on the implementation of the Living Wage Initiative. Cabinet had resolved at its meeting on 16 January 2013 that arrangements be made for the initiative to be implemented with effect from 1 April 2013.

The Living Wage would be applied to all employees whose current hourly wage rate (inclusive of any 'wrap around' payments) was less than £7.45 per hour. The additional amount payable would be shown as a separate 'Living Wage Supplement' so that the integrity of the council's pay and grading structure would not be compromised.

The estimated cost of implementation for council employees would be around £12,500 per year including employers' on-costs. A review of rates of pay of relevant staff would be undertaken as part of the work plan to calculate the financial implications of bringing contracted staff up to a living wage and establishing an achievable timeframe for doing so.

**Resolved:** That the progress made be noted.

## 10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

The chairman had agreed to this item of business being considered as one of urgency in accordance with section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as it was important that the matter be resolved prior to the next meeting of the committee.

The trade unions raised concerns that it appeared that the new Staffing Committee had been set up with delegated powers which had previously been delegated to the Chief Executive, without relevant council policies and procedures having been amended to reflect this change.

The chairman undertook to raise and clarify the matter with the Chief Executive at a forthcoming meeting and report back.

**COUNCILLOR JOHN TAYLOR**  
**Chair**

The meeting concluded at 11.00 am.