

## **PERFORMANCE REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 22 November 1999, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Evans (Chair); Councillors Mrs Begg, Caborn, Mrs Compton, Ms Flanagan, Mrs Goode, Mrs Hodgetts, MacKay, Shilton Tamlin, Wooller.

Councillor Short (Vice-Chairman of the Council)

(Councillor Mrs Goode substituted for Councillor Boad, Councillor Tamlin substituted for Councillor Mrs Clayton and Councillor Wooller substituted for Councillor Coker).

### **1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 1999, having been printed and circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

### **PART I**

(Matters not the subject of powers delegated to the Sub-Committee by the Council)

### **2. REPORTING AND MONITORING COMPLAINTS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team in response to the Sub-Committee's query at its meeting on 4 October 1999 about why the Environmental Health Unit had been absent from the monitoring report of complaints received. The report also covered the Sub-Committee's request for a report on the corporate complaints system for reviewing the causes of complaints to ensure that avoidable problems did not reoccur.

The report which had been presented to the Sub-Committee on 4 October 1999 had contained a table created by the complaints computer system, which contained details of all the complaints which had been handled for the period 16 March to 20 September 1999. The reason why no complaints had been shown against Environmental Health was that there had been none recorded on the system for that period. It was being investigated whether the system report could be amended to produce an entry equivalent to "no complaints received". Staff had been reminded of the system and the need to put complaints about the services through that system.

In 1997/98 and 1998/99 the Council's return to the Audit Commission had stated "no" to the following performance indicator question:-

"Is there is a system for reviewing the cause of complaints to ensure that

## **PERFORMANCE REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE (Continued)**

avoidable problems do not reoccur?".

It was understood that Business Units reported details of complaints to their Service Committees (or equivalent). However, with the guidance of the Council's external auditors, this was not enough to enable the answer to be yes. What the auditors had been asking for was a corporately managed system to monitor and deal with this issue. Following consultation with other District Councils in Warwickshire, this seemed to be down to the judgement of the individual external auditor.

This particular indicator, along with the others dealing with complaints, had been dropped for the year 1999/2000. Only those involving an ombudsman would be asked for in 2000/01. The year after, Best Value indicators would be set up and these would be based on consultation.

It was felt that it should be ensured that all Service Committees (or equivalent) were receiving reports on the causes of complaints and action which could be taken to ensure they did not happen again.

**RECOMMENDED** that the report be noted.

### **3. GENDER REASSIGNMENT CODE OF PRACTICE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on the introduction of a Gender Reassignment Code of Practice.

As with other minority groups there was a need to ensure that fair treatment was given on all occasions. The Code of Practice made a clear statement of Warwick District Council's position to both staff and the public and provided guidelines for existing staff, service delivery and recruitment.

The Code of Practice had been written in partnership with Press for Change, an organisation which campaigned to achieve equal civil rights and liberties for all trans-gendered people in the United Kingdom through legislation and social change. The organisation provided legal advice, training and support in this area to many organisations.

The Code of Practice had been complemented by a training course which had been attended by members of staff from both Personnel and the Commissioning Team. Additional courses would be held for the recruited employee support officers.

The Chair thanked Press for Change for guiding the Council's thinking on this issue and working with officers to produce the Code of Practice.

Amendments to the Code of Practice were suggested by members.

## **PERFORMANCE REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE (Continued)**

**RECOMMENDED** that the introduction of the Gender Reassignment Code of Practice as set out in Schedule 1 be supported.

### **4. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE AND DISCIPLINARY APPEALS PROCEDURE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report from the Commissioning Team on proposed amendments to the disciplinary and disciplinary appeals procedures.

Copies of the draft amended procedures were appended to the report.

Consultation on the draft documents had been undertaken with Business Unit Heads and the Unions. The fact that the procedures had been revised would be included in the Warwick Update and the Intranet with a reference to availability of the procedures from the personnel co-ordinators and the central personnel section.

Amendments to the procedures were suggested by members.

Officers suggested that the number of members on a grievance appeal panel be changed from 4 to 3 members, so that it was in line with other appeal panels in operation.

**RECOMMENDED** that

- (1) the revised disciplinary procedure and disciplinary appeals procedure as set out in Schedule 2 be endorsed; and
- (2) the number of members on the panel for a grievance appeal hearing be changed from 4 to 3 members.

### **PART II**

(Matters delegated to the Sub-Committee by the Council)

NIL

(The meeting ended at 6.45 p.m)

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