

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11 March 2008 at Riverside House, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Guest (Chairman); Councillors Coker, Copping, Crowther, Gifford, Hammon, Mrs Higgins, Mrs Knight and White.

Councillor Copping substituted for Councillor Mrs Goode and Councillor Mrs Higgins substituted for Councillor Mrs Bunker.

932. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

933. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the special meeting held on 15 January 2008, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

934. **WARWICK PLANT MAINTENANCE**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Housing and Property Services to propose the transfer of the Warwick Plant Maintenance team from the Cultural Services department to the Housing and Property Services department.

Warwick Plant Maintenance was a three person team, comprising a technical inspector who was supervisor of two engineering technicians. The team was responsible for the maintenance and safe operation of mechanical, electrical, water and gas equipment and systems at a range of corporate properties and assets, with a primary focus on the Council's leisure centres and swimming pools.

Prior to the Building on Excellence restructure the team formed part of the Leisure and Amenities department's establishment, reporting to the Sports Facilities Manager for line management purposes. However, both the staffing budget for the team and associated budgets for the parts, equipment and stores required for their day to day work, were managed by the old Property Services department, with day to day operational support on technical issues provided by the Energy Manager from that unit.

Since the restructure there was no direct equivalent to the Sports Facilities Manager post within the new Cultural Services department and therefore no obvious line management successor for the team. Given the previous involvement of the Energy Manager in their operational management it was felt that it was now more appropriate to transfer the team to the Housing and Property Services department's establishment. Under the proposed arrangement the Energy Manager of that unit would become the team's line manager as set out in appendix one to the report.

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The Heads of Cultural Services and Housing and Property Services were in agreement that the proposed establishment transfer should have no impact on the team's primary role of maintaining the mechanical and electrical systems at the Leisure Centres and responsibility for maintaining the water quality at the swimming pools. The Head of Cultural Services would therefore nominate one of the Centre Managers to attend a monthly meeting of the team and the Energy Manager to ensure the effective and efficient operation of this element of their work.

RESOLVED that the transfer of the Warwick Plant Maintenance staff from the Cultural Services establishment to the Housing and Property Services establishment, be approved.

935. SUNDRY DEBTORS SECTION

The Committee considered a report from Finance on the work of the sundry debtors section and how it had increased. The report requested an increase in the establishment.

The work of the Sundry Debtors Section had increased over the past few years and this work had been absorbed by the existing debtors' staff and creditors' staff.

The section was trying to streamline procedures, free up time and be more proactive in debt recovery however the workload meant that staff were struggling to cope with the day to day processing. A small amount of work had been transferred to the Housing Benefits recovery team.

With the increase in work, it would be necessary for the establishment of the Debtors Section to be increased. It was proposed to create an additional post graded H subject to job evaluation for 21.5 hours. This post would initially be for a period of two years.

RESOLVED that subject to Business Improvement District for Leamington being approved, the establishment of the Debtors Section to increase by one part time post (21.5 hours) temporary (for two years) graded H (subject to job evaluation), be approved.

936. CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

The Committee considered a report from Environmental Health on career development within the section.

A review of staffing and development needs within Environmental Health had been carried out which was attached at appendix 1 to the report. The conclusions reached were that the basic mix of professional and technical staff was right for the current service delivery. However changes to some job roles were proposed, so that the most efficient use of current staff resources could

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be made. Also to reward and recognise the knowledge and competence of qualified technical staff.

A career development table had been set out at appendix 2 and 3 to the report to clarify the options available.

It had been acknowledged that there were budgetary constraints which would limit the flexibility for achieving the goals.

New Job Descriptions for Health & Safety and Food Safety Inspectors had been written and assessed by the Hay Panel. The senior status for technical staff did not trigger a higher salary banding but within the scheme it was proposed to recognise the role and level of competency of Senior Technical Officers (of any specialism) by utilising the increment between E1 and E2 grades i.e. scale point 31.

The proposals had been supported by CMT, subject to approval by this Committee.

RESOLVED that the proposals, as set out in the report, be approved.

937. CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE ESTABLISHMENT

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Revenues and Customer Services to agree to the revised staffing structure in the Customer Service Centre (CSC).

On 11 December 2007, the Executive agreed that the CSC should relocate to Shire Hall, Warwick as part of a phased approach to the integration of District and County Council CSC's.

The first part of the integration project required a change to the grades of the posts on the CSC establishment. This was necessary so that any concerns that staff working for Warwickshire County Council were being treated more favourably than their colleagues from Warwick District Council was immediately removed. It was an approach that has proved successful in One Stop Shop Programmes.

Given the training demands on the CSC, there was a recommendation to replace an Advisor with a Senior Customer Service Advisor whose role would be to provide on-going coaching for Customer Service Advisors as well as being the link between back-office service areas and the CSC for more specific technical training.

Since December 2007 discussions had been ongoing with the Trades Unions and this report was the culmination of the consultation process.

RESOLVED that the revised staffing structure of the Customer Service Centre (CSC) as detailed in section 4 of the report, be approved.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

938. CHANGES TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME

The Committee considered a report from Finance updating the Authority on the changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which would come into effect on 1 April 2008.

The changes to the LGPS were set out in regulations brought forward during 2007 to introduce changes with effect from 1 April 2008, subject to some further drafting requirements. Despite these drafting refinements, it was important that the Authority took the necessary steps to ensure they were ready for the new scheme to be implemented on 1 April 2008.

There would be no choice under which members could opt to remain in the old scheme; the new scheme was due to come into force on 1 April 2008.

Under the amended scheme provisions, benefits related to scheme membership up to 31 March 2008 would be calculated under the old scheme rules. Benefits related to membership after that date would be calculated under the new scheme rules.

Appendix A to the report showed a comparison of the rules and benefits provided relating to pre and post April 2008 scheme membership.

Some of the major features to note were:-

- 1) The scheme remained a defined benefit, final salary scheme.
- 2) From 1 April 2008 there would be 7 different percentage rates of member contributions, depending on the individual's level of pensionable pay.
- 3) The employer's rate would remain a single percentage, determined by actuarial valuation (13.5% 2008/09).
- 4) From 1 April 2008 the accrual rate for benefits was to change from a '1/80th' base to a '1/60th' base.
- 5) There would no longer be an automatic lump sum. Instead there was provision for commutation of pension to give a lump sum at a conversion rate of 1:12 (e.g. £1 of pension commuted gives a lump sum of £12).
- 6) Ill health provision changed from a scale of benefits related solely to the individual's length of pensionable service, to a two tier system related to the individual's ability to undertake future gainful employment (however, a further amendment to this was currently being considered at national level which would provide a three tier system).
- 7) Lump sum death in service grant increases from twice pensionable pay to three times pensionable pay.

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Overall the benefits from the new scheme were deemed to be slightly improved to those in the old scheme. Appendix A to the report compared some of the notable changes.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the pension contribution banding rates based on individuals' pensionable pay as at the 1 April each year, with adjustments to bandings only made in the year in the event of significant grading changes, be agreed; and
- (3) a review to be undertaken at the end of 2008/09 to consider what problems have been encountered by adopting the policy.

939. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Committee considered a report from the Acting Strategic Director for Customer Information and Advice on the meetings of the Members Development Group and request the Group Leaders to consider volunteers to be trained in undertaking the annual development reviews.

The Employment Committee agreed that the Member Development Group should continue after the Council were successful in achieving the Primary Award in the West Midlands Member Development Charter. This Committee also agreed the introduction of member development reviews and that these should take place in April/ May.

The group had met on a quarterly basis to consider the recommendations from the assessment and monitor member development activities. They became involved in producing the induction programme for new members that ran from May until July 2007 and the general feedback from the programme was very positive and a formal evaluation was carried out by Members' Services as part of their member survey. There had been some criticism that the programme did not continue after the induction phase; this was now being remedied by the publication of a full training programme.

The group had produced a development needs questionnaire which had been circulated to all members; although the response rate was low (12 out of 46 members) the group intend to use the responses received as a sample and develop a programme from this sample. The full programme would be reported to the next Employment Committee on 23 June 2008.

Part of the next stage of development was to introduce annual development reviews for members, as agreed by the Employment Committee in December 2006. The Group would encourage the Group Leaders to ask for suitable and interested volunteers to undertake training in how to conduct such reviews and to submit those names to the Learning and Development Officer.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

RESOLVED that

- (1) the work of the Member Development Group be noted;
- (2) the proposed approach to the member development programme, be approved; and
- (3) to request that Group Leaders nominate volunteers to be trained in undertaking member development reviews and report back to the Learning and Development Officer.

940. **PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED that under Section 100(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items, by reason of a likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minute Nos.	Para Nos.	Reason
941, 942, 943 & 944	1	Information relating to any individual
941, 942, 943 & 944	2	Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual;
941, 942, 943 & 944	3	Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

941. **RESTRUCTURE OF ENGINEERING SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Engineering which sought approval from them for the proposed changes to the current Engineering establishment.

Following acceptance by the Council of the Building on Excellence proposals, Engineering Services became a separate Service area from its original links with Planning. This change commenced on the 1 January 2008 and required the service area to not only discharge its current municipal engineering functions, but also new responsibilities in respect of car park maintenance, facilities management and all aspects of the civil contingencies agenda, including emergency planning and business continuity management.

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Engineering services won a four year framework maintenance agreement to work on behalf of the Environment Agency in the discharge of their maintenance management responsibilities for River which were previously critical watercourses within the District.

The proposed restructure had also come about as part of Government policy on locality working. The requirement was now a common theme in a series of White Papers and legislative proposals where there was a clear steer to ensuring greater public involvement in the shaping of local services and championing neighbourhood working across the public sector. For Engineering Services to respond to this challenge there was a need to realign officer responsibilities into an area based concept, covering the following 5 area groupings; Kenilworth, Warwick, Leamington North, Leamington South & Whitnash and the Rural Area.

To reflect the new responsibilities of Engineering Services and to embrace the concept of locality area working and the possible delivery of the four year term contract with the Environment Agency, it would be necessary to restructure the existing establishment of the Engineering group and to increase the Service Area staff compliment from its current 10.4 Full Time Equivalent's to 13.4 Full Time Equivalent's.

Additional information regarding the report due to go to Executive on 25 March 2008 was also circulated at the meeting for information.

Congratulations were passed to Roger Jewsbury, Head of Engineering Services and his team for being competitive with the private sector and for winning the funding from AWM.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the recruitment of the two new posts, as set in appendix 3 to the report, be approved, subject to the agreement of the Executive on the financial appraisal of the staff cost implications on the Councils budget;
- (2) the recruitment of the new post of Civil Contingencies Officer, financed from the Civil Contingencies budget, be approved irrespective of the outcome of the Term Contract from the Environment Agency as set out in appendix 3, table 1 of the report; and
- (3) the reporting organisational structure of Engineering Services as set out in the report, together with the proposed changes to the staff posts set out in Appendix 3, tables 2 and 3 of the report, be approved.

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942. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION STAFFING

The Committee considered a report from the Acting Strategic Director for Customer Information and Advice to approve the establishment for the Economic Development and Regeneration service area including the Enterprise Team that would be funded as part of the AWM grants received.

The Council had been successful in securing funding from Advantage West Midlands (AWM) to develop the Althorpe Innovation and Enterprise Centre (AIEC), Creative Arches and Brunswick Enterprise Hub; all of these projects brought funding to support the staff required to deliver the outputs required by the projects.

The posts would be established on a permanent basis as the proposals were for them to be financed through the income generated by the scheme with the exception of the Community Enterprise Officer in years 3 and 4 where the full cost may need to be charged to the Economic Development Budget. It was expected that if lettings of the facilities at the Brunswick Enterprise Hub go according to forecasts that the cost to the Economic Development Budget would reduce to £13551 over years 3 & 4. The projects would run for a minimum of five years to achieve the outputs agreed with AWM therefore the posts would be permanent.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the staffing establishment for the Economic Development and Regeneration service area as set out in appendix A to the report, be approved; and
- (2) the Creative Industries Officer W02/200 be deleted from the establishment.

943. ADMINISTRATION REVIEW REDUNDANCY

The Committee received a report from the Acting Strategic Director for Customer Information and Advice to request agreement for the redundancy of the Chief Administration Officer in Environmental Health.

The Administration review undertaken in 2005/06 identified the post of Chief Administration Officer as being deleted from March 2008.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the early retirement on the grounds of redundancy for Chief Administration Officer, in Environmental Health with effect from 30 June 2008, be approved; and

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- (2) the Executive be recommended to approve the cost of redundancy be met from the early retirement reserve.

944. DISCRETIONARY REGULATIONS

The Committee received a report from the Acting Strategic Director for Customer Information and Advice on the information and advice requested by this Committee.

The Committee had previously decided to change the redundancy multiplier from a factor of 2 to a factor of 2.3. However the Committee did not have the information on which to make a decision relating to the timing of that change.

The legal advice required was set out in appendix A to the report.

It was proposed and duly seconded that the multiplier of 2.3 be backdated to 17 December 2007 and be advertised to all interested parties. The proposal was won with 5 votes to 4.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the legal advice received in relation to the changing of the scheme of discretionary regulations be noted;
- (2) the multiplier of 2.3 be backdated to 17 December 2007 and advertised accordingly.

(The meeting ended at 5.35pm)