

# Employment Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15 June 2016 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

**Present:** Councillors Mrs Bunker, Day, Doody, Mrs Evetts, Mrs Falp, Mobbs, Parkins; and Cain.

## 1. **Apologies and Substitutes**

- (a) Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barrott and Murphy; and
- (b) Councillor Mrs Falp substituted for Councillor Heath and Councillor Cain substituted for Councillor Rhead.

## 2. **Appointment of Chairman**

It was moved by Councillor Doody, and duly seconded that Councillor Mrs Bunker be appointed Chairman of Employment Committee.

**Resolved** that Councillor Mrs Bunker be elected Chairman of Warwick District Council's Employment Committee for the municipal year 2016/17.

## 3. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 4. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2016 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 5. **Members/Trades Unions Joint Consultation & Safety Panel**

Members reviewed the minutes from the Members/Trades Unions Joint Consultation & Safety Panel meeting 17 March 2016. It was noted that the meeting had started with insufficient numbers present to form a quorum. The Human Resources Manager explained that two members from the Trades Unions' side and two members from the employer's side had to be present to be quorate; but in this case, confusion about the meeting arrangements led to the meeting being inquorate at the start.

**Resolved** that the Members/Trades Unions Joint Consultation & Safety Panel minutes of 17 March 2016 be noted.

## 6. **Policy Update – Probation Policy and Procedure/Equality & Diversity Policy Statement**

The Committee considered a report from Human Resources which presented the Council's updated Probationary Policy and Procedures. It set out the Authority's roles and responsibilities providing support through procedures in a consistent manner.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

The report presented the Council's updated Equality and Diversity Policy Statement. It set out the Authority's policy in succinct statements making a commitment to be more explicit in the area of Equality and Diversity internally and externally.

In response to questions from the Committee, the HR Manager informed the Committee that at present, a new employee was only required to undertake a probationary period if they joined from outside the public sector. The updated policy took this into account to ensure a probationary review period was included as a part of all employees' contracts irrespective of whether they were from the public sector or the private sector.

In response to a question regarding continuous service, the HR Manager confirmed that as part of our legal obligations, new employees from other public sector organisations would bring their continuous service with them.

In cases of non performance within the probation period, this would be managed through probationary reviews. Redundancy payments would not apply in cases of the individual not performing in their role.

Members noted that TUPE was not mentioned in point 7.1.2 of the report, and they sought clarification again about whether continuous service would affect the settlement if officers were unsuited to the role. The HR Manager explained TUPE was a different area and TUPE regulations would apply.

The HR Manager explained that probationary period reviews were also in place to recognise the strengths of new officers to the Council and an opportunity for discussions to take place relating to career progression. The probationary period was normally set at six months, but there could be occasions when this could be extended.

The HR Manager explained that the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement was to update and ensure that the culture of equality and diversity was embedded within the Council; and that the Council met legislative requirements. The Council's HR Department provided advice to senior managers. Contractors were now required to answer questions on their adherence to equality and diversity as part of the procurement and tendering process. The Council could call upon expertise from Warwickshire County Council for advice.

### **Resolved that**

- (1) the Probationary Policy and Procedures, as set out in Appendices 1 and 1(a) to the report, are approved; and
- (2) the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, is approved.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **7. People Strategy 2016-2020**

The Committee considered a report from Human Resources. The People Strategy set out the guiding principles within which the Council would make decisions that affected its employees. The principles would act as a framework which would not only guide the decision making in relation to staffing matters, but impact on the culture of the organisation moving forward. The aims of the People Strategy and the associated actions were set for a four year period and would be reviewed in line with changing organisational needs.

The Head of Cultural Services, who was the appointed Chair of the PSSG, informed Members that there was no budget set aside for this work, but the work done would impact all service areas' budgets. For instance, if the work being done by the PSSG looked at retaining staff, then the conclusions drawn could be to increase salaries.

Members noted that in the 2015 employee survey, results indicated that only 46% of employees felt recognised and rewarded for their work. Human Resources Manager stated that she had questioned the relevance of some of the questions because the survey covered both private and public sector employees. The Council was actively looking for ways to reward and recognise staff. Work was being undertaken to determine the benefits of working for the Council, and it was acknowledged that many people enjoyed working at the Council. More work was required to promote the benefits of working for the Council.

**Resolved** the proposed People Strategy 2016-2020, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be supported.

### **8. Public and Press**

**Resolved** that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items, by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

### **9. Minutes**

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2016 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

(The meeting ended at 5.25 pm)