

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 19 September 2006 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Crowther (Chair), Mrs Bunker, Gifford, Gill, Goode, Hammon, Hatfield and Kundi.

Councillors Mrs Goode substituted for Councillor Boad.

430. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

431. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2006 having been printed and circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

432. **ADDITIONAL STAFFING REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION (HMO)**

The Committee considered a report from Housing Strategy seeking authority to employ additional staff to deal with the licensing of HMOs.

Mandatory licensing of HMOs had been introduced from 6 April 2006 without any increase in the staffing arrangements within the Private Sector Housing Division of Housing Strategy. This had been a conscious decision as it was not known at that time how much additional work this introduction would entail.

The fee structure for HMO Licensing had been agreed by Members at the meeting of the Executive in March 2006 based on a theoretical workload which in turn was based on a supposed number of HMOs which might need to be licensed. These fees were to be hypothecated for the mandatory HMO licensing service over a five year period.

It is now becoming clearer that the amount of additional administrative work is slightly more than was anticipated, whilst the additional technical work is likely to be at the same level as was reported. However, by employing two, part time staff for up to five years, it is thought that the additional workload could be undertaken without detriment to the existing Private Sector Housing service..

An expenditure budget to cover the cost of the posts had been approved by the Executive.

The Audit & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Executive had queried the need for the posts to be limited to five years.

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The officers agreed to investigate the possibility of the additional hours being worked by existing staff instead of employing new staff

RESOLVED that the proposed employment of the following additional Technical and Administration Staff as a consequence of the introduction of mandatory licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) be approved.

- i. Technical Housing Surveyor...22 hours per week
- ii. Administrative officer,.....15 hours per week

433. CREATION OF PERMANENT CONTRACT FOR TOWN CENTRE MANAGERS

The Committee considered a report from Leisure and Amenities seeking authority to change the contracts for the Town Centre Business Development Manager posts A05020 and A05030 from a three year fixed term contract to permanent contracts.

In May 2004 two 3 year fixed term Town Centre Business Development Manager posts, one for Kenilworth and one in Warwick, had been created out of what was the existing permanent Town Centre Manager post for Warwick and Kenilworth. This was achieved by securing funding from SRB6 to help fund the additional post.

The £14,000 funding from SRB6 had now finished and alternative funding had already been secured from the Town Councils in Kenilworth and Warwick, Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council to meet the loss of funding from SRB6.

There had been clear benefits to providing dedicated resources in each town to delivering Town Centre Management and both Town Councils and the County Council had indicated their willingness to continue to support the role both financially and in terms of the resources they have made available for the TCBDM.

The introduction of Business Improvement Districts could change the way Town Centre Management was delivered across the towns. However in both Kenilworth and Warwick this was some years away and as the current contracts came to an end at the end of this financial year some arrangement needed to be made for when this happened.

One of the current job holders was employed on a permanent contract in their role as the Joint Town Centre Manager post created in 1998. This post was then used as one of the two Town Centre Business Development Managers posts formed in 2004. It was proposed that the original Joint Town Centre Manager post should now formally become the post for the Town Centre Business Develop Manager for Kenilworth.

RESOLVED that:

(1) the establishment of a permanent post of Town Centre Business Development Manager for Kenilworth on the termination of the current fixed term contract in April 2007 be approved; and

(2) the establishment of a permanent post of Town Centre Business Development Manager for Warwick on the termination of the current fixed term contract in April 2007.be approved.

434. ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES - PLANNING

The Committee considered a report from Planning and Engineering requesting approval for amendments to the Structure of the Development Control and Policy, Projects and Conservation and for additional permanent posts.

The structure of the development Control and Policy Teams within Planning had been reviewed during the course of the year in the light of changing demands on the Service and consistently high work loads. As a temporary response to some of these pressures, additional staff had appointed on a temporary basis, funded by the provisions of the Planning Development Grant (PDG) allocations made to this Council to assist in the delivery of Planning Services

The conclusion of the review was that it was necessary to undertake amendments to each of the Teams under review as follows:

Development Control

Planning Appeal and Enforcement work has been undertaken by a separate Appeals and Enforcement Team within Development Control. The review concluded that it would be appropriate to revise this approach, retaining the team for all enforcement work, but enabling some appeal work to be handled within the Area Teams dealing with applications. This would give better continuity on the less complex applications and allow an improved balance of work. At the same time, enforcement work remains at a high level and in order to maintain a response to pressures, the addition of a further part time enforcement Officer post to the team is required. In order to achieve these objectives, the following is proposed:

- Transfer one existing Planning Officer Post from Appeals and Enforcement to the Eastern Area Team
- Creation of a permanent full time Planning Officer post within the Western Area Team (currently occupied on a temporary basis and funded through PDG)

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- Creation of a permanent, part time Enforcement Officer post within the A&E Team (currently occupied on a temporary basis and funded through PDG)

Policy, Projects and Conservation

The work of the Team had increased considerably with the requirements arising from the new Planning System introduced through the new Planning Act and additional staffing is required in order to meet its demands. This was proposed to be achieved as follows:

- Creation of two permanent, full time Planning Officers (one at present currently occupied on a temporary basis and funded through PDG)

The issue of funding of the proposals had been approved by the Executive at its meeting of 24th July.

The above proposals could be brought into effect by the following changes to the establishment:

- DC Planning Officer post N02056 to be transferred from Appeal and enforcement to Development Control East
- Permanent full time DC Planning Officer post N02045 to be created in Development Control East
- Permanent p/t (17 hours) Enforcement Officer post N02066 to be created in Appeals and Enforcement
- 2x permanent full time Planning Officer posts N03051 and N03052 to be created in Policy, Projects and Conservation

RESOLVED that the proposed establishment changes as set out above be approved.

435. LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT TAKE UP OFFICERS

The Committee considered a report from Revenues and Customer Services requesting approval to add two Benefit Take-up Officers posts to the establishment to be wholly funded by central government.

Acting as the lead authority for the five districts and boroughs of Warwickshire (the Partnership), the Council had been able to secure Central Government funding from Local Public Service Agreement 2 (LPSA2) to undertake a county-wide Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit take-up campaign.

To receive this funding the Partnership had to devise a business case to satisfy Central Government that the claimant caseload across the county would increase by 10% by March 2009.

The business case had been based around the recruiting of two benefit take-up officers who would work throughout the county on various take-up

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initiatives. The Partnership had been able to demonstrate that the short-term funding it had previously received from the Department for Work and Pensions to undertake take-up activities had been effectively used and consequently the business case had a lot of credibility.

Central Government haD awarded the Partnership £100,000 to be spent by March 2009. This funding was to support the recruitment, employee and service related costs for two take-up officers for a period of two years.

The Council had agreed to act as the employing authority for the project. However, the Partnership has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that any redundancy and pension costs arising out of the termination of the project would be met equally by the partners. Due to the nature of the contracts, there would be no entitlement to enhanced severance or early retirement benefits. Any statutory costs would be met from within current budgets.

The Take-up officers and their work would be wholly funded by LPSA2 funding so there will be no financial cost to the authority.

RESOLVED that two Benefit Take-up Officer posts be added to the Council's staffing establishment to be wholly funded by Central Government.

436. APPRAISAL MONITORING

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services setting out the findings from the monitoring of performance appraisal.

The appraisal scheme covered all people employed by Warwick District Council, whether on a permanent or temporary contract. Casual and agency staff were excluded.

All performance appraisals should be completed over a three month period from April to June. The number of staff requiring an appraisal is taken as all those on the establishment as at 1st April less anyone who left, was on probation, took long-term sick leave or was on maternity leave during the appraisal period. The data collection date was 7th August.

In total 354 appraisals were completed, 71.4% of those due. This was slightly lower than in 2005 when the results were 72%.

RESOLVED that

(1) the contents of the report be notes and the monitoring continue on an annual basis so that any trends in non-compliance with the performance appraisal policy can be identified and necessary action taken.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

- (2) a report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee updating the number of appraisals completed in the current year

437. CORPORATE TRAINING AND PEOPLE SKILLS SCOREBOARD MONITORING

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services on the findings of an annual monitoring of the Council's corporate training activities.

During the year 2005/2006, 27 corporate training sessions had been run (12 different courses). Courses varied in duration between a half day for induction-linked seminars and five days for the Management Development Programme. Overall, 247 delegates attended. This represented 321 training days in total, an average of 0.58 training days per employee based on the average number of staff in post during the year (552.5). This is an increase of 11.5% over the previous year.

Altogether £21,195 was spent directly on the provision of corporate training courses using external trainers with a further £15,256 spent on catering, equipment, furniture, printing and other training related expenses. No cost was shown against those courses which were presented by an in-house trainer.

None of the above figures included internal ICT training which was organised and recorded by ICT Services. During 2005/06 150 ICT courses took place attracting a total of 491 delegates. This includes: 136 people attended training for the new Task financial system, 43 attended ICT induction courses, 40 attended Web Content training and 72 people took the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) exams.

The investment in training as a percentage of payroll costs was 1.3% in 2004/05. This was very slightly lower than the previous year but was 7.4% higher than the average performance of our family group (1.21%).

When external and in-house training was considered together, the average number of training days attended per employee was 2.6. This was down by 33.3% on the previous year but slightly higher than the average performance of our family group (2.49 days).

26.4% of the total training expenditure in 2004/2005 was on Information Communication Technology. The average expenditure of the family group on ICT training was 9% of total expenditure.

The Council had been successful in retaining the Investors in People (IIP) award in November 2005. The IIP standards had recently been revised and the Council will next be reviewed against the new criteria in 2008. The data from this report will assist in preparations for this review.

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The Employment Committee had already approved the appointment of a permanent part time Training and Development Officer to replace the temporary post which had been vacant since May. It was intended to make this appointment before the end of the year and this would enable the increased emphasis on training and development to be maintained.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

438. EMPLOYMENT DATA MONITORING

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services on the findings of an annual monitoring of the number and breakdown of people employed by the Council

As at 1st April 2006 there were 545 people on the WDC establishment. This was a decrease of 2.7% on April 2005.

80.6 % of all females and 48.2% of all males employed were within grade band J-F and equivalent (65.3% of all staff), and 1.4% (4) of all females and 5.1% (13) of all males are in senior management grades (3.1% of all staff).

7.3% of all females and 5.1% of all males (6.2% of all staff) belong to ethnic minority groups. This compared to a local population of 7.3%. 76.5% of all the Council's ethnic minority staff are graded J-F and equivalent, 20.6% (7) are in grades E1-D, 2.9% (1) in grades C-A. No senior management posts were held by ethnic minority staff.

The total percentage of part time or job share workers was 28.8% (12.1% of all males and 43.8% of all females).

16 people on the establishment had declared themselves as having a disability. This represents 2.9% of the total employees. The percentage of local population aged 18 – 64 who have a "limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work" was 10.8%.

The only Service Area which showed a significant change in the number of established posts over the year was Regenesi which reduced from 19 posts in April 2005 to 9 in 2006 as the Regenesi project came to an end.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

439. MONITORING OF GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINARY CASES

The Committee considered a report from on the key findings from an analysis of grievance and disciplinary cases during the year 1st April 2005 - 31st March 2006.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

During 2005/2006 three people had raised formal grievances (two of which had been resolved at stage one) and there were four grading appeals heard (one successful). Six individuals had been the subject of disciplinary action, resulting in one written and two verbal warnings, one suspension (case still ongoing) and two dismissals.

The percentage of the workforce involved in disciplinary and grievance cases was 1.65% equating to nine staff, three of whom were from ethnic minority groups. Seven were male and two female, eight full time and seven grade band J-F while 2 were from grade C and above.

The number of grievances, grading appeals and disciplinary cases had increased in 2005/06 over the previous year (by a total of 85.7%) but the number of grading appeals and disciplinary cases had both decreased since 2003/04.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

440. MONITORING OF STAFF LEAVING WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services on key findings from an analysis of leavers during the year 1st April 2005 - 31st March 2006.

During 2005/2006 a total of 192 people had left WDC. The total workforce as at 1st April 2006 was 545 indicating a staff turnover rate of 35.2%. However, this figure reduced to 25.1% when non-voluntary leavers were removed from the calculation.

There was a significant increase in the number of staff leaving over the previous year with the number of both voluntary and non-voluntary leavers increased by approximately 200%.

51.6% of all leavers were from Leisure and Amenities. This was not unexpected given the nature of the services which traditionally had a high turnover. A further 18.75% of all leavers were from Regenesys due to the end of the project.

11.5% of all leavers had been employed here for less than one year and a further 33.9% left within two years of commencement of employment. These figures included staff employed on short-term contracts. 8.3% of the leavers had been employed here for ten years or over (42.6% of the current workforce have been at WDC for ten or more years).

44.3% of leavers were male, 55.7% female. This proportional split was similar to that of the total staffing where males represent 47.2% and females 52.8% of the workforce.

Ethnic minority groups represented 6.7% of leavers (6.2% of the workforce).

Three people who left had a disability (1.6%) and 2.9% of the current workforce had a disability.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

Staff from grade band J - F represented 87% of those who left (65.3% of workforce belonged to this grade band), 8.9% were from grade band E1 - D (22% of workforce), 3.1% were from grade band C – A (9.5% of workforce) and 1% (2 people) from senior management grades (3.1% of the workforce).

The major reasons recorded for leaving were: resignation (64.1%); end of contract (22.4%); and transfer to another local authority (7.3%). In addition, there were six retirements (one early), four redundancies and two people were dismissed.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

441. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES RECRUITMENT MONITORING

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services on key findings from an analysis of job applications during the year 1st April 2005 - 31st March 2006.

During 2005/2006 a total of 139 posts had been advertised attracting 841 applicants, an average of 6.1 applicants for each vacancy.

Eight of the advertisements attracted no suitable candidates and were subsequently readvertised or withdrawn. 131 of the posts were shortlisted and 123 appointments were made. For 6.1% (8) of the posts where interviews took place it was not possible to make an appointment. In most cases the posts were then readvertised using different media and/or rewording the advertisement in order to attract a new range of applicants.

49.1% of all applicants (49.5% of those shortlisted) were male and 44.9% of applicants (47.2% of shortlisted) were female. The remaining 5.9% of applicants did not complete a monitoring form. The gender split of those appointed was 49.6% male and 50.4% female.

People of ethnic minorities represented 15.4% of applicants and 11.3% of those shortlisted while the total percentage of ethnic minorities appointed was 4.9% (6 out of 123 people appointed). This compared to a local population of 7.3% total ethnic minorities.

The percentage of local population aged 18 – 64 who had a “limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits daily activities or work” was 10.8%.

Overall, 18 people with disabilities applied for posts within the Council during 2005/2006 (2.1% of all applicants), 13 were shortlisted for interview (3.1% of all shortlisted) and one was appointed (0.8% of those appointed).

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

442. SICKNESS ABSENCE MONITORING

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services on key findings from an analysis of sickness absence during the year 1st April 2005 - 31st March 2006.

The total number of working days lost due to sickness absence from 1st April 2005 until 31st March 2006 was 4,530.6 which was an average of 9.19 days per employee (4% of working time) or 4.69 days if long-term sickness (20 days or more) is taken out of the calculation.

The average number of days lost per employee increased by 1.23 over the previous year but decreased slightly when short-term only sickness absence is examined. In 2005/2006 there were 33 cases of long-term sickness (6.7% of total staff) which accounted for a total of 2,220.3 days or 49% of all the absence for the year. On average, employees taking long-term sickness were absent for 67.28 days. The number of long-term cases increased by five (17.85%) over the previous year and the number of days lost due to long-term absence increased by 49.1%.

Eight (24.2%) of the individuals who took long-term sickness absence during the year had now left the Council's employment.

The reason attributed to 28.03 % of all long-term sickness (16.35% of total sickness absence) was stress, depression, mental health & fatigue. The WMLGA's National Survey recorded that this was the reason for 20.7% of all sickness absence in English and Welsh Local Authorities during 2004/05.

The other major causes of long-term sickness were chest & respiratory problems (12.25% of all long-term and 7.75% of total absence) and back, neck and other musculo-skeletal problems (11.67 of long-term and 12.31% of total absence). According to WMLGA's survey these reasons accounted for 5% and 22.5% of all sickness absence respectively for 2004/05.

When short-term only absence is examined the main recorded cause was infections (25.54% of all short-term absence).

28.85% of all sickness was attributed to reasons outside our reporting categories or non-specified reasons.

The CIPD reported that the average number of days lost due to sickness absence in 2004/05 was 10.3 for the whole of the public sector and 6.8 for the whole of the private sector.

The BVPI results for 2004/2005 showed that the West Midlands district council average was 9.9 days or 4.3%.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the following action be approved: -

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

(1) More use to be made of the Capability Procedure in the early stages of long term absences where a return to work is unclear;

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(2)- A review of the occupational health service in conjunction with other Warwickshire Districts and the County;

(3) Continuation of the implementation of the Stress at Work action plan with an increased emphasis on staff well being;

(4) improved management information to be provided once the personnel service is centralised to allow appropriate action to be taken by managers at a local level.

(The meeting ended at 5.20 pm)