

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 January 2014 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bunker (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Bromley, Coker, Copping, Doody, Hammon, Kirton, Mrs Knight, Mobbs and Wilkinson.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Wreford-Bush.

36. **SUBSTITUTES**

There were no substitutes.

37. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

38. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 November 2013 and 27 November 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to a change in the record of the Apologies. It was agreed that the record of Apologies would show that Councillor Mrs Bromley had been advised not to attend the meeting held on 13 November 2013 because she had been unable to attend the meeting on 7 November 2013 when candidates for the vacant posts had been shortlisted for interview.

Members requested that a report should be presented at the next Employment Committee in April 2014 with a review of the procedure for recruiting senior officer posts. There was concern that there was not clear guidance on whether a councillor should attend the second round of the selection process if they had not attended the first.

39. **NATIONAL LIVING WAGE**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Finance asking Members to consider the implementation of the National Living Wage for all Council employees. This would be with effect from 1 October 2014 (the report incorrectly stated from 1 September 2014).

The Head of Finance explained that some of the monetary figures stated in the report had now been revised in light of additional information concerning casual employees. In the report under 5.1, it was stated that costs in respect of casual employees were not expected to exceed £20,000, but following receipt of more detailed information, this figure had risen to £50,000 giving a total of £68,000 with the £18,000 for all contracted employees and £50,000 for casual employees. The Head of Finance stated that the funding of this £68,000 could be found from two

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

budget headings; £60,000 from the General Fund and the remaining £8,000 from the Housing Revenue Account.

It was felt that the option of applying the Living Wage to those aged 21+, in line with the National Minimum Wage should be investigated to see how that would affect costs. It was felt that legal advice would be required to see if there were any implications concerning such matters as discrimination, and an example cited was where two people applied for the same job but one was aged below 21.

Point 3.3 of the report addressed how the Living Wage would be paid and the report suggested paying the additional money as a "supplement" to basic pay. It was felt that this method would overcome many of the issues such as discrimination. If the amount required to make basic salary hit the Living Wage amount was paid as a supplement, it would overcome such inconsistencies where staff at grade I were effectively receiving the same amount as staff on grade J and would allow the Authority to simply monitor salary and grade levels at basic wage level.

The Head of Finance informed Members that the Living Wage proposals had been discussed with the Unions but the discussions had not covered the principle of introducing a 21+ age threshold. It was felt that there would not be many staff below the age of 21 who would be affected, but figures for the actual numbers of staff affected were not available for the meeting.

Members did have concerns over the potential for a person on grade J to be potentially receiving more money than a person on the higher grade I and felt it was important to discuss how this issue could be addressed. It was also noted that a person receiving the Living Wage supplement could find themselves in the position where on receipt of an increase in basic pay, their Living Wage supplement decreased.

Members were keen for the Council to adopt the Living Wage but felt that introducing the 21+ age threshold was the sensible approach to keep control of costs. They felt that more investigation was required and raised the question of how it might affect Warwickshire County Council staff who worked alongside Warwick District Council staff; and how the scheme would be implemented for casual staff.

In principle, Members were in favour of the scheme being implemented for employees aged 21+ and for the additional amount to be paid as a supplement to basic pay and this would be reviewed on an annual basis; but before the scheme could be properly agreed, further information was required:

- How many staff would be affected who were aged less than 21?
- How many staff were grade I up to and including spinal point 10?
- How many casual staff worked for Warwick District Council?
- Did casual staff have to be paid the Living Wage?
- What were the latest employment rates for Warwickshire?
- Anecdotal evidence of where employers had been unable to recruit people.
- Legal implications of not paying people aged under 21.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

RESOLVED that further information is required and that the amended report be presented to the meeting in April.

(The meeting ended at 5.00 pm)