

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27 October 2009 in the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Coker (Chairman); Councillors Mrs Bunker, Caborn, Crowther, Michael Doody, Gifford, Mrs Goode, Hammon, Kirton and Wilkinson.

An apology was received from Councillor Mrs Knight.

(Councillor Wilkinson substituted for Councillor Mrs Knight.)

20. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

21. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 September 2009 and 7 October 2009 were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

22. **WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive's Office regarding the revised draft complaints policy, specifically the aspect regarding complaints about members of staff.

The policy had been developed to incorporate guidelines from the Local Government Ombudsman.

Members requested that the policy be circulated to Town and Parish Councils, once complete. They also highlighted the need for specific guidance for councillors and suggested that this should form part of the induction programme for new councillors.

RESOLVED that the revised corporate complaints policy, with regard to complaints about members of staff, be approved, subject to amendments by the Standards Committee and additions requested by the Unions.

(Councillor Kirton joined the meeting during this item.)

23. **FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY**

The Committee considered a report from Human Resources introducing a policy in relation to Flexible Retirement which would allow members of staff in the pension scheme to reduce their hours or grade and draw a pension early.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

Warwick District Council had the discretion to not apply a reduction to a pension if it was drawn early, or to choose not to apply a reduction in certain circumstances.

The Local Government Pension Scheme regulations allowed employers the discretion to waive the pension reduction. It was proposed that this would only be possible in exceptional circumstances, for example, on compassionate grounds or as an alternative to retirement on grounds of redundancy or efficiency, if there was a strong business case.

The Council had adopted the following definition of “compassionate grounds” for waiving pension reductions;

- compelling domestic reasons which would affect the ability of the individual to continue with his/her present working arrangements
- ill-health which did not meet the ill-health retirement criteria for an enhanced pension e.g. a member of staff who had experienced health problems was able to carry on working but would benefit from a reduction in hours or duties.

Members recognised that the scheme could be advantageous both to staff and to the Council.

The Human Resources Manager confirmed that, where there was a cost involved, requests had to be agreed by Council. All other cases were approved by Heads of Service. The Employment Committee expressed a desire to see details of all cases, regardless of cost. Recognising that the procedure could only be amended in line with the constitution, the Committee agreed to ask Council to approve a change to the constitution, for a period of 12 months, as detailed in the recommendation below.

RECOMMENDED that Council be requested to approve an amendment to item v on page C9 of the Council’s constitution, for 12 months, to read “To determine applications for early or flexible retirement as detailed in the Council’s Early or Flexible Retirement Scheme”; and

RESOLVED that, subject to approval of the above recommendation, the Committee supports the recommendations contained in the report and Policy for Flexible Retirement, on a pilot basis with a review in January 2011.

24. ICT – ISP 2009 REPORT

The Committee considered a report from the Customer Information Service which presented the Information Security Policy for 2009.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

The new policy was significantly different from previous policies in that it had been broken down into nine sub-policies. While this was largely inevitable due to the growth of the policy, the major driver had been the Council's need to meet central government's Code of Connection (CoCo).

Some concern was expressed at the meeting over the size of the policy and how it would be used, but otherwise the Committee were in support of the changes which had been made.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Information Security and Conduct Policy 2009 and its associated sub-policies be approved;
- (2) ICT Services identify an appropriate phased implementation plan for the policies and develop associated training material and staff awareness campaigns; and
- (3) Service Area Managers should ensure that all their staff, especially those who are system owners, are appropriately trained and are aware of the practical application of these policies.

25. APPRAISAL MONITORING UPDATE

Members received a report from the Chief Executive's Office presenting an update on appraisals completed since the report in September 2009.

The Committee were assured that a lack of appraisals carried out in Housing and Property Services was being addressed.

The Chairman requested that updated figures be presented to the December meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 5.15 pm)