

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

An excerpt of the 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.)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. 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.

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

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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.

(The meeting ended at 5.15 pm)