

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19 December 2005 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

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

A one minute silence was observed in memory of Councillor Graham Windybank.

730. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

731. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2005 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

732. **CHANGE TO THE ENGINEERING STAFF ESTABLISHMENT**

The Committee considered a report from Planning and Engineering which sought the Committee's endorsement to amend the current Engineering Group establishment, within the Planning and Engineering Business Unit.

At the Executive Committee on 24 October 2005, Members agreed the following recommendations;

- To agree to enter into an agreement for the Council to act as an Agent to the Environment Agency to maintain within the District, the rivers formally known as 'Critical Ordinary Watercourses' (COW's).

As part of the recommendation, Members also agreed to;

- Undertake minor alterations to the Engineering establishment to meet the technical and operating requirements of the Agency as set out in the report.

The alteration to the Engineering establishment was necessary to meet the technical and competency requirements of the Environment Agency. This could be achieved by re-designating an existing FTE, band 'G' Technical Clerk post (No NO6/300), currently occupied by a temporary appointment, to a FTE, band 'F – E1' Engineering Technician post, via a new appointment.

No evaluation of the new Technician post was necessary. The range of duties and qualifications of the post would fall into previously graded generic job descriptions which were in existence for those staff already employed as Engineering Technicians.

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RESOLVED that the minor change to the current staff establishment of the Engineering Group as set out above be approved.

733. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Environmental Health which presented to Members the amended Corporate Health and Safety Policy for approval.

The Council's Corporate Health and Safety Policy had been in existence for many years. However, due to the office relocations and departmental restructuring, there had been a need to review and amend it in line with the current structure of the Council. The opportunity had also been taken to review the Council's corporate responsibility for Health and Safety. Amendments had also been made in light of this.

There were a significant number of amendments to the draft Policy that the Committee felt necessary.

RESOLVED that the draft Health and Safety Policy as submitted be agreed for a period of 3 months whilst the amendments required by the Committee are made; the policy to be brought back for approval at the Committee meeting of 14 March 2005.

734. CUSTOMER SERVICE STAFFING

The Committee considered a report from the Customer Information and Advice Directorate which requested Members approval for the re-designation of post T07010 from Customer Services Manager (One Stop Shops) to Customer Access Projects Officer and re-designation of post T03060 from Senior Customer Services Advisor to Customer Services Team Leader as part of the joint One Stop Shop pilots.

Joint One Stop Shop Pilots – Post T07010 implications

In May 2004, the Executive agreed the Improvement Plan for the Customer Access Best Value Review. A major part of the plan was to pilot joint one stop shop arrangements with the County Council.

The respective councils were now in a position to pilot the smaller service model at Whitnash Library.

As part of the changes to adapt to the new way of working, a revised staffing structure had been put in place to reflect the new responsibilities. The operational manager of the joint one stop shop initiative was a county council employee and the team leader role was undertaken by a district council employee.

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Now that these revised arrangements were in place, it had become clear that there was no longer a need for a One Stop Shop manager employed by the District Council. Consequently the deletion of this role from the establishment was recommended. The post was not currently occupied.

However, it was recognised that the Council still had a major role to play in delivering its services in a face-to-face environment. The establishment of a Customer Access Projects Officer role with responsibility for the remainder of the joint one stop shop pilot and potential developments at Lillington, Leamington and Warwick libraries, as well as work at Brunswick's Healthy Living Centre, would have ensured that this aspect of the Council's service delivery was not neglected.

Even if the joint project was deemed to have not been successful, there would still be a need for such a Projects Officer as the Council reconsidered how it would deliver its face-to-face service in the main towns.

Revenue Costs from 2006/2007

Redesignation	
From..... One Stop Shop Manager	= -£36,922
To..... Customer Access Project Officer	= +£28,567

	= -£ 8,355

Joint One Stop Shop Pilots – Post T03060 implications

There was a similar position with Post T03060. The next stage of the pilot at Whitnash Library would require some day-to-day management resource. Although the overall operational management of the pilot would be with the County Council it would not be possible for the District Council Team Leader to extend her scope further, as along with leading the staff at Kenilworth she also led two staff based at Warwick Connection.

The establishment already had a Senior Customer Service Advisor post based at Riverside House whose responsibility was to manage frontline staff based at Riverside House. Discussions had taken place both with the officer currently undertaking this role and Unison and the officer was keen to extend her role to cover management of staff at Whitnash as well.

The new role would effectively mimic the joint one stop shop post of Customer Services Team Leader. It was recognised that this could only be for the duration of the pilot at present and therefore the same protections would apply to the officer should the pilot be unsuccessful.

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Revenue Costs from 2006/2007

Redesignation	
From..... Senior Customer Service Advisor	= -£25,441
To..... Customer Services Team Leader	= +£26,932

	= +£1,491

Overall Revenue Effect from 2006/2007

As the change in management arrangements had been necessitated by the joint working arrangements it was appropriate to net the cost of the changes. There was therefore a saving to the Council of £6,864.

RESOLVED that the proposals set out in the report be approved.

735. **REDEPLOYMENT AGREEMENT**

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services which sought the Committee's endorsement of a Redeployment Agreement circulated with the report.

The original Employment Stability Agreement had been introduced in 1988, to ensure that, where possible, members of staff whose employment was at risk would be considered for appropriate alternative vacancies, and, to provide guidance in relation to the extent of salary protection. Minor amendments were now considered necessary and the revised agreement reflected these changes.

RESOLVED that the Redeployment Agreement as submitted be adopted.

736. **TERMINATION OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE**

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services which sought the Committee's endorsement of the draft Termination of Contract Procedure circulated with the report.

The 2004 Disputes Resolution Regulations established what action should be taken in cases where it was proposed to dismiss an employee where there were no specific arrangements in place. Basically, it introduced a three stage process for dismissals. Warwick District Council had procedures for most dismissal cases such as disciplinary and capability. This legal procedure should be followed in the instances of:

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- Compulsory Retirement before the age of 65 (including ill health retirement).
- Redundancy situation (including voluntary redundancy).
- Non renewal of a fixed term contract (has been incorporated into WDC Guidance).
- In certain, cases, some other substantial reason.

RESOLVED that the Termination of Contract Procedures as submitted be adopted.

737. 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 item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraph 1 of the Schedule 12A 9 of the Local Government Act 1972.

738. EARLY RETIREMENT OF SAFETY ADVISER

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services which sought recommendation to the Executive of the early retirement of the Council's Safety Adviser on 31st March 2006 under Section 31 of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

The Council's Safety Adviser had completed 40 years in the pension scheme and 32 years with the Council. He had requested to retire early under S31 of the Scheme.

Agreement to this request would provide the opportunity to re-evaluate the work undertaken by the Safety Adviser in the light of the reorganisation which had taken place within Environmental Health.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the request for early retirement from the Safety Adviser with effect from 31 March 2006 be approved.
- (2) the Committee recommend to the Executive that the cost of £3221.55 be met from the Early Retirement Reserve and that the Executive should receive a report on the overall effect on the retirement reserve.
- (3) consideration be given to the most appropriate requirements for the future provision of health and safety advice to the Council.

(The meeting ended at 5.15 pm)