

# EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 December 2004 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

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

## 361. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

## 362. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2004, having been printed and circulated were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

## 363. DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT CENTRE LEARNING STAGE

The Committee considered a report from the Customer Information and Advice Directorate advising the Committee regarding progress in relation to the Document Management Centre.

The purchasing and implementation of electronic document management and workflow would be managed as one of the Councils Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Programme projects. It would be an essential requirement for meeting the Council's responsibilities under the Data Protection and Freedom of Information Acts.

The Best Value Customer Access Review had identified a number of drivers to develop document management. A number of improvements to the way incoming and outgoing post was processed had come out of the Office Administration review conducted in the autumn of 2003.

The closure of Riverside House cash office in January 2005 had forced a change to the way postal payments were processed and the expansion of the Customer Services Centre had created a need to improve the way the follow up to telephone calls was dealt with.

### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the learning stage approach to the Document Management Project be approved.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (Continued)**

### **364. JOINT ONE STOP SHOP INITIATIVE**

The Committee considered a report from the Customer Information and Advice Directorate advising the Committee of employment issues in relation to the Joint Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council One Stop Shop Initiative.

The Committee's approval was sought to continue negotiations with the Unions with a view to reaching agreement and implementing changes to the Council's employee's terms and conditions to harmonise them with those proposed for the Joint One Stop Shop Initiative. Approval was also sought to give notice of a change to terms and conditions for One Stop Shop employees in the event it would not be possible to reach agreement.

The Best Value Customer Access Review had made the following proposal:

#### **To Work Jointly with the County Council to provide a One Stop Shop Service for Public Services to:**

- Improve the convenience of Public Service One Stop Shops in the District.
- Increase the number of services available for each venue.
- Extend opening hours.
- Increase the number of enquiries complete at first point of contact.
- Increase the number of users.
- Maintain the existing excellent customer satisfaction ratings.
- Share property costs.

This had been agreed by Executive.

A Joint Member briefing had been held in September and a Programme Board had been set up following this. The Board comprised of four members from the District Council and three members from the County Council.

#### **RESOLVED** that

- (1) the continuing negotiations with the view to reaching agreement on the changes to terms and conditions be approved;
- (2) the implementation of the agreed changes be approved; and
- (3) a further report on progress be submitted to the Committee in March 2005 after which notice to changes to terms and conditions will be given if agreement is not reached.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (Continued)**

### **365. CHANGE OF POST DESIGNATION – BUILDING CONTROL**

The Committee considered a report from Planning and Engineering seeking approval for the deletion of Building Control Technician Post N05/025 and its replacement by a Career Grade Building Control Officer post.

Within the Building Control establishment was a full-time post of Building Control Technician. This post had evaluated at Band G and funding had been available within the Group budget for £16,731, scp 20, the top of the grade.

Until recently, the post had been occupied by a member of staff who, sadly died in service earlier this year. At that time, the post was occupied on a part-time basis, though funding was available for full-time employment.

A review had been undertaken of the needs of the Building Control Service which had concluded that the service would be better served by the post being occupied by a trainee Building Control Officer on a full-time basis. The reason for this was that with the increasing competition from private Approved Inspectors the service needed to be more proactive and improve its response to the challenge of the competition through targeting the delivery of the core service of handling BC applications in a manner that could compete effectively. In addition, the service was having to take on significant additional responsibilities through new and revised regulations. This would put significant pressure on the delivery of the service.

The most cost effective way of doing this was to bring in a staff resource at the trainee level. This was a relatively low cost approach, and enabled the Council to train an individual through the BC process so that they became increasingly effective in service delivery.

A trainee Building Control Officer would be brought in at no higher than the bottom of Band G (£17,335 including employer overheads), and, subject to experience, possibly at Band H. The result would be on initial appointment, no additional salary resource requirement and possibly even a saving. However, the post holder would need to be able to advance through a career grade, eventually arriving at the Band D salary top salary point of £29,100 (overall cost £34,224 including overheads).

It was likely that the advancement through the grades would take a period of six years, as the appropriate qualifications were achieved, therefore any salary enhancements would be incrementally brought in over a period of time. In view of the financing regime for Building Control, it would be reasonable for these increases and the cost of the necessary training to be met from the surplus otherwise made by the service. The Building Control service generated significant amounts of fee income. This income generation was governed by government regulations that required the service to at least break even on those activities and the Council had set its charges to comply with those regulations. Since the new fee regime came into operation the

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE (Continued)**

service had generated income in excess of the break even position. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Local Government Association had stressed the importance of investing surpluses back into the service to improve its quality. In practice therefore the net cost would be zero. The appointment would therefore be highly cost effective.

**RESOLVED** that the deletion of Building Control Technician Post N05/025 and its replacement by a Career Grade Building Control Officer post be approved.

(The meeting ended at 5 p.m.)

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