

# EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 25 June 2007 at Riverside House, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Barrott, Mrs Bunker, Coker, Crowther, Gifford, Mrs Goode, Guest, Hammon, Heath and White.

(Councillor Barrott substituted for Councillor Mrs Knight).

## 167. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Guest be appointed Chairman for the ensuing year.

## 168. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

### Minute Number 174 - Early Retirement on the Grounds of Redundancy for Car Park Inspectors

Councillor Mrs Goode declared a personal interest because she was a member of Warwickshire County Council.

## 169. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 13 March 2007, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

## 170. DEBTORS INCOME POST F02170

The Committee considered a report from the Financial Services Manager on a request to increase post F02170 from 25.5 hours to 37 hours per week.

The current establishment within the Sundry Debtors Section comprised of two posts, working 25.5 and 22 hours respectively. Following a review by Personnel and Finance it had become clear that there was not sufficient cover within the Section. This was notably the case when one of the section was on leave, when for example, there may not be sufficient cover to answer phones or provide a service. In addition, with more capacity, the section could be more pro-active in chasing up outstanding debts, so leading to improved recovery rates and less debt being placed with outside debt collection agencies.

Following the resignation of the existing post holder it had been decided to extend the established hours from 25.5 to 37 per week. This would also assist the recruitment process.

The additional cost of £8,100 (at top of scale, including overheads) could be funded from within the existing budget. In addition, the additional hours should in due course lead to improved recovery and fewer bad debts being written off.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

**RESOLVED** that the established hours for post F02170 be increased from 25.5 hours to 37 hours per week.

### **171. NEW POST OF COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICER**

The Committee considered a report from the Community Safety Manager on the creation of a full time post of Community Safety Officer, until March 2010.

The community safety service was over reliant on the only mainstreamed post, and was the lowest staffed community safety team in Warwickshire.

The demands on community safety had increased considerably with advent of Safer Neighbourhoods, a planned merger of the South Warwickshire Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships and action planning required by the Home Office to address three year British Crime Survey performance issues.

The community safety budget in 07/08 was £34,100. Commitments would be in the region of £8,000 as Warwickshire County Council had committed to cover a previous contribution of £7,000 made to the provision of a Neighbourhood Watch Officer. This left around £26,000 for a post.

**RESOLVED** that the full time post of Community Safety Officer be approved, until 31 March 2010.

### **172. WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL – SMOKE FREE POLICY**

The Committee considered a report from Environmental Health on the Council's Smoke Free Policy.

The Council had had a No Smoking Policy for a number of years. The policy had been reviewed and amended to align with new legislation and to help meet the Council's commitments to health outcomes contained within the Local Area Agreement and Local Strategic Partnership. It applied to Council owned buildings, employees and members.

The Health Act 2006 introduced new powers in relation to the control of smoking in workplaces and enclosed public spaces. The policy had been amended to take account of the new legislation. In addition, the opportunity of this period when the new legislation was being introduced, had been taken to raise the awareness of the issue within the authority and for the Council to take a stance on the health related aspects of smoking.

The proposed Smoke Free Policy had been agreed by the trade unions recognised by Warwick District Council

**RESOLVED** that the Smoke Free Policy be approved.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **173. 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 items by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within paragraphs 1 & 2 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

### **174. EARLY RETIREMENT ON THE GROUNDS OF REDUNDANCY FOR CAR PARK INSPECTORS**

The Committee considered a report from the Amenities Managers on the early retirement on the grounds of redundancy for the car park inspectors.

In line with government policy, responsibility for the enforcement of on-street parking restrictions would pass from the Police to Warwickshire County Council in August 2007. This would mean that parking offences cease to be a criminal matter and became a civil matter instead.

Warwick District Council would operate the scheme for this District on behalf of the County Council under a partnership agreement.

This change to parking enforcement meant that the existing role of Car Parks Inspector at Warwick District Council would no longer be appropriate to meet the needs of decriminalisation. The current post covered off-street parking enforcement only and had a responsibility for enforcing a finite and minor number of offences. This had resulted in twelve employees being directly affected by the move to decriminalisation and initially facing the risk of redundancy.

Of the twelve employees who were initially at risk of redundancy, seven had either been removed from the redeployment register or secured alternative employment positions within Warwick District Council. Three had secured more senior posts within the new parking enforcement structure.

At the current time, five Car Parks Inspectors remained at risk of redundancy due to the move to Decriminalised Parking Enforcement. As each affected employee was over the age of fifty years, they would each be entitled to take Early Retirement on the Grounds of Redundancy and were covered in Section 5.3(1) of the Personnel Handbook.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the early retirement on the grounds of redundancy for five Car Parks Inspectors as a result of the move to decriminalisation of parking enforcement, in line with Warwick District Council's Redeployment Agreement, be approved; and

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

- (2) it be approved that any of the five current Car Park Inspectors who have not found suitable alternative employment once the new staff begin their employment, take garden leave until their last date of employment with WDC, which is currently 16 September 2007.

### **175. PRINT ROOM STAFFING**

The Committee considered a report from Members' Service on the current temporary staffing arrangements and proposed a permanent establishment.

At its meeting on 14 March 2006, the Committee considered a report on proposals to amend the staffing establishment of the Print Room by the addition of a part time Advertising Officer and Graphic Designer in connection with the establishment of an advertising agency and the additional work being obtained externally.

The Design, Print and Advertising Manager had been requested to develop a business plan for the appointment of an advertising officer to assist with the operation of the advertising agency. This would be on the basis that the proposed appointment would be self-financing with the potential to operate at a profit by attracting external clients.

The business plan had indicated that, to enable the advertising agency to operate effectively and professionally, it would be necessary to appoint an Advertising Officer, initially on a part time basis. In addition, the appointment of a second Graphic Designer would be required to work partly on advertising which, again, would be funded through the advertising agency.

The contract of employment of the second, temporary Graphic Designer would shortly expire but, to enable the business to continue on its existing, successful basis, it was necessary to continue this on a permanent basis.

The part time Advertising Officer was currently occupied by an officer on secondment, which would conclude at the end of July.

Since the meeting of the Committee in March 2006, the Leisure and Amenities service identified the need to improve income for the Council's leisure facilities by increasing usage. Key to this had been the implementation of a marketing campaign, particularly with regard to swimming and golf.

**RESOLVED** that the temporary employment of the Graphic Designer post and Advertising Officer be made permanent on the basis that their work will be self-financing and that there will be no net cost to the Council.

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)**

### **176. EARLY RETIREMENT OF THE HEAD OF PROPERTY SERVICE**

The Committee considered a report from the Acting Director for Customer and Information and Advice on the early retirement of the Head of Property Services.

The Head of Property Services requested early retirement over twelve months ago but at that time it was not felt in the interest of the Council to agree to the request and therefore it was not progressed any further.

In July 2007, the Head of Property Services would have completed 41 years local government service and had again requested consideration of his request for early retirement. The needs of the Council had moved on to a point where it would allow changes to the structure to occur with greater ease should this retirement be agreed.

Another member of the property services management team would be retiring in September which would allow a re-organisation of the work undertaken at a business management level within the unit. This was coupled with the proposals currently being consulted upon, known as Building on Excellence, that propose a joining of the Engineering section of Planning and Engineering with the Property Services to make efficient use of the resources in both these units to service the Councils property and construction needs.

**RESOLVED** that the early retirement of the Head of Property Service, be approved, with effect from 30 June 2007.

(The meeting ended at 5.35pm)