

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 March 2005 at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Crowther (Chair), Councillors Mrs Begg, Mrs Bunker, Gill, Hammon, Hatfield, Kirton and Kundi.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Boad.

(Councillor Gill substituted for Councillor Tamlin)

820. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute Number 824 – Raising Awareness Through Mentoring Project (RAMP)

Councillor Crowther declared a personal interest because he was a Director of the Coventry Solihull & Warwickshire Partnership and Connexions.

821. **MINUTES**

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

822. **LEGAL SERVICES RESTRUCTURE**

The Committee considered a report from Legal Services seeking the Committee's approval of the changes to the staff structure of Legal Services.

The Principal Legal Officer, would be taking early retirement as from 30 June 2005 and the Head of Legal Services, had expressed a wish to retire at a mutually convenient date later in 2005.

This presented an opportunity to restructure the Senior Legal Services establishment, i.e. Head of Service (S02/010), Solicitor (S03/011), Principal Legal Officer (S03/012). The rest of the Legal Section, (Senior Legal Officer, two Legal Officers and Administration Assistant), would remain unchanged as would the Land Charges Section.

Over the last few years the need for legal advice had grown as a result of new legislation, and various corporate initiatives.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

Added to this, when the Strategic Director (Environment) left the Authority in December 2003, the Assistant Chief Executive (Members' Services), was appointed Acting Monitoring Officer as an interim appointment. The reorganisation of Legal Services provided the opportunity for that role to be added into the responsibilities of the Head of Legal Services. It was proposed that the Assistant Chief Executive (Members' Services) would act as the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

To accommodate these changes, the job description of each Post had been substantially re-written. The Head of Legal Services would apportion time between the roles of Monitoring Officer, provider of corporate legal advice, e.g. Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Human Rights and the management of the service, (including Land Charges at least until that service was fully automated).

The designation of Principal Legal Officer had been changed to Solicitor. In practice, the current postholder, given his experience, had acted as a Solicitor for many years and this was reflected in the Post's current evaluation.

The two posts of solicitor would be responsible for the provision of specialist legal advice to other business units within the Council, including advice to the Licensing and Planning Committees.

It was intended that all three Postholders would act as a Senior Legal Team. This would allow flexibility to meet the challenge of legal advice on new areas of law, and support the Head of Legal Services in giving corporate advice and managing the Unit. In that respect, Post SO3/011 would deputise in the absence of the Head of Legal Services on holiday or sick leave.

The proposal had been the subject of informal consultations last year, and formal consultation on the first and final proposals with staff and the Unions during January and February 2005.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the restructure of Legal Services be approved;
- (2) the addition of the role of Monitoring Officer to the Head of Legal Services Post (SO2/010) be approved; and
- (3) the re-designation of Post (SO3/012) from Principal Legal Officer to Solicitor be approved.

823. BENEFITS SERVICE STAFFING

The Committee considered a report from the Customer Information and Advice Directorate which sought approval for the re-designating of posts T03/110, T03/280, T03/115, T03/116, T03/230 and T03/240 from temporary to permanent.

RESOLVED that posts T03/110, T03/280, T03/115, T03/116, T03/230 and T03/240, be re designated as permanent.

824. RAISING AWARENESS THROUGH MENTORING PROJECT (RAMP)

The Committee considered a report from Equalities actively promoting the involvement of the Council employees in the RAMP Project.

The Raising Awareness through Mentoring and Personal Support (RAMP) Project was funded by the PIE SRB6 Project aimed at addressing barriers around the lack of disability awareness in the job market and provided one-to-one support and advice to those disabled people who wished to use the scheme. The Project was designed specifically to assist disabled people into employment and supporting businesses to employ skilled disabled people.

The project was an innovative partnership between the Council of Disabled People in Warwickshire for the Mentoring in Business Scheme, Coventry Solihull and Warwickshire Partnership Ltd and Connexions for the Personal Advisor Scheme supporting Disabled People into employment and Warwickshire County Council for the Business Link work, with support from a number of agencies.

The scheme would begin with the new financial year and would offer businesses both large and small the opportunity to contribute towards their local community through enabling members of staff to become mentors. A volunteer mentor would, in turn, learn everything a business needed to know about complying with the latest instructions contained in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation coming fully into force on 1 October 2004 and would be classed as the disability champion within their own workforce. The RAMP Project would take on the responsibility for recruiting and selecting mentors.

Volunteer mentors would be RAMP trained in mentoring skills, disability equality and the DDA, with the course designed specifically to address confidence boosting skills, training needs, career development and the problems that disabled people faced when trying to access employment.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the recruitment of mentors within staff teams as both a contribution to the Corporate Strategy and a development opportunity be supported; and
- (2) the commitment of staff time (estimated as 2 hours per month) to effectively mentor disabled individuals be approved.

825. ICT INFORMATION SECURITY AND STAFF CONDUCT POLICY

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services and ICT Services which recommended the adoption of the ICT Information Security and Staff Conduct Policy for inclusion in the Personnel Handbook and thereby becoming part of the terms and conditions of employment for staff.

The ICT security policy had been thoroughly updated to take account of changes to best practice and case law in relation to the use of information technology in a working environment.

The policy had been discussed by the IEG Steering Group the Joint Communications Forum and the Corporate Management Team. It had also been available on the intranet.

RESOLVED that the ICT Information Security and Staff Conduct Policy be adopted.

826. ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services and Members' Services which proposed a timescale and actions for the achievement of the West Midlands Member Development Charter.

At their meeting in September 2004 the Employment Committee had recommended that the Council should sign up for the West Midlands Member Development Charter.

This proposal was included as an action within the Corporate Personnel Services Service Area Plan for 2005/06 with an objective to achieve the Charter by 2008.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Council be assessed by September 2006 against the Primary Milestone of the Charter;
- (2) each of the four parties submit nominations to the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) to assist with the preparation for the Primary Milestone Charter;
- (3) nominations be submitted to the Assistant Chief Executive (Personnel) for two councillors to become assessors and if more than two nominations are received the four group leaders will be consulted to agree which councillors should be put forward; and

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

- (4) the Assistant Chief Executives (Personnel and Members' Services) support the member working group and nominate two officers as assessors.

827. 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 paragraph 1 of the Schedule 12A 9 of the Local Government Act 1972.

828. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – STAFF RESTRUCTURE

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Director (Environment) which sought the Committee's approval to the changes to the staffing structure of Environmental Health.

Since the departure of the Head of Environmental Health, in October 2003, the Environmental Health Business Unit had been managed on an interim basis by the existing service managers reporting initially to the Head of Planning and Engineering and more recently to the Strategic Director (Environment).

Whilst many of the service functions had reported satisfactory performance during this extended period, it had been recognised that there was insufficient capacity to progress various service planning functions. There had also been delays in communications which had impeded decisions on service improvements.

A paper detailing the views of UNISON was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the results of the staff consultation exercise be noted;
- (2) the proposed staff restructure for Environmental Health and Waste Management Services, be approved;
- (3) a further report be submitted to the Committee on the proposed merger of the Housing Strategy and Environmental Housing Services;
- (4) the restructuring proposals are cost neutral and the implementation date of 1 April 2005, be noted;

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

- (5) the job descriptions for the proposed service managers, and the Head of Service post, be prepared and graded within the available funding;
- (6) the job descriptions for the proposed service managers, and the Head of Service post, be used as the basis for ring fenced internal interviews for the existing Environmental Divisional Managers; and
- (7) the current Waste Manager/ Cleansing Manager be confirmed in this post.

829. RESTRUCTURE OF HOUSING REPAIRS TEAM

The Committee considered a report from Housing Services which sought approval for the restructure of the Housing Repairs Team and to advise the Committee on the potential impact of the proposed changes.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the revised structure for the Housing Repairs Team be approved;
- (2) the formal notification be given to the affected staff on 17 March 2005 that their employment will terminate on 17 June 2005 on the grounds of redundancy if redeployment is not achieved;
- (3) proactive efforts to secure suitable alternative employment for those members of staff at risk of redundancy continue; and
- (4) the Executive be recommend to approve the following:
 - the costs of early retirement and severance of employment on the grounds of redundancy for employees B and D are met from the Housing Revenue Account, if it does not prove possible to secure redeployment to suitable alternative employment;
 - the costs of severance of employment on the grounds of redundancy for employees C and E are met from the Housing Revenue Account, if it does not prove possible to secure redeployment to suitable alternative employment; and

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

- the cost of early retirement on the grounds of redundancy for Employee A is met from the Housing Revenue Account.

830. IMPLEMENTATION OF SINGLE STATUS FOR HOUSING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report from Housing Services and Corporate Personnel informing the Committee of the progress of the restructure of the teams of staff based outside of Riverside House, engaged in the Community Care Management System and sheltered housing service and the concurrent implementation of Single Status from 1 April 2005, and, to seek approval for the recommendations.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the organisation chart as set out in the report, be approved, with effect from 1 April 2005; and
- (2) the continuation of the on-going negotiations between officers and the Trade Unions, be approved, to allow the introduction of revised job descriptions and the implementation of Single Status from 1 April 2005.

831. EARLY RETIREMENT – MANAGER SUPPORTED HOUSING

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Executive which sought the Committee's approval of the early retirement of the Manager of Supported Housing in Housing Services under the scheme for early retirement on the grounds of efficiency, with effect from 31 March 2005.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the request for early retirement on the grounds of efficiency for the Manager of Supported Housing from 31 March 2005 be approved; and
- (2) it be recommended to the Executive that the cost of early retirement and severance of employment is met from the Housing Revenue Account.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

832. SENIOR PERSONNEL OFFICER – TWO YEAR PART TIME CAREER GRADE

The Committee considered a report from Corporate Personnel Services which requested the establishment of a part time senior personnel officer career grade post in Corporate Personnel Services.

RESOLVED that the establishment of the Senior Personnel Officer post, be approved.

(The meeting ended at 6.07 pm)

I:\secs\members\Minutes\employment160305.doc