

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 March 2009 in the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 4.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Coker (Chairman); Councillors Caborn, Copping, Crowther, Michael Doody, Gifford, Hammon, Kirton, Mrs Knight and Shilton.

Councillor Copping substituted for Councillor Mrs Goode.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Shilton.

841. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

842. **RESTRUCTURE OF CULTURAL AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report from the Heads of Culture and Neighbourhood Services which highlighted changes to the staffing structures in Culture and Neighbourhood Services as a result of Building on Excellence. It also set out the outcomes of the review by the HAY Panel of the revised job descriptions for the members of staff now operating in these service areas.

As part of Building on Excellence, a revised staffing structure was introduced within the newly formed Culture and Neighbourhood Services.

Some adjustments to that structure and to the job descriptions of staff working in those teams were necessary. In most cases following those adjustments the grades had remained at the grade on the establishment list. In some cases the grades had been increased as a result of additional responsibility for the post holder.

Currently there was a half post shown on the establishment list within Cultural Services that had not been filled. It was recommended that by deleting this post from the establishment, there would be money available to part fund the additional cost associated with the changes identified in Appendix 3 to the report.

The following changes to the establishment were required as a result of the HAY Panel review. Two staff on grade F move to grade E1, one member of staff on grade E1 be moved to grade E2 and the introduction of a team leader in both teams could lead to the two further E2 appointments from E1.

One element of the revised structure was the creation of a team leader to undertake day to day management responsibility. The plan to appoint a team leader for the Community Recreation Team would go ahead.

Given the reduction in the number of staff in the Green Team from four to three and the linking of those staff with the 16 staff within the Waste Team, it was decided to appoint a Green Team leader on an initial six month appointment.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

This would allow a review of the joint waste/grounds maintenance operations to be undertaken where there was currently a Senior Contract Manager post vacant. Any revisions to the structure which were identified would then be made later in the year once the most effective way of operating these two contracts more closely had been established.

The Committee were of the opinion that there was not enough information within the report to clarify the restructure and could not agree the recommendations until the following areas were clarified.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred until further information was submitted to the Committee on the following to a special meeting:

- Why are these changes happening?
- When will they take effect?
- What differences are there between the jobs, e.g. any extra responsibilities?; and
- What would the budgetary figures be over the next 4 years?

843. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY REVISED

The Committee considered a report from the HR Manager on how the Recruitment & Selection policy had not been revised to reflect the centralised service since the centralisation of Corporate Personnel Services (now Human Resources).

The Recruitment & Selection policy previously promoted the recruitment advertising of every post externally in the interests of promoting equal opportunity for all and to attract candidates from the community in which it serves. This had now been amended to enable internal recruitment advertising in the first instance before external to promote internal growth and development of staff, job satisfaction and to reduce recruitment advertising costs.

Member appointed positions and Joint National Council (JNC) graded posts were exempt from this amendment and should be recruited for in an open, competitive market.

The policy was out of date and inaccurate; therefore it was misleading and not useful. This may not be a long term policy change and would be reviewed to ensure it was still fit for purpose – depending on the current environment.

The change in policy to recruit internally prior to externally advertising had many benefits:

- it would promote internal development and promotion, giving better job prospects and staff satisfaction
- it would give opportunity internally to those that may have looked elsewhere for promotion and therefore increasing staff retention and saving the associated costs of replacing leavers
- it would also reduce advertising costs as lower graded roles would be replaced and not higher graded roles.

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

There may be occasions when it would not be sensible to recruit internally only and the HR Manager would have the discretion to consider roles on an individual basis.

RESOLVED that the Policy be changed subject to review and that the review should be presented to the Employment Committee 12 months time.

844. PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items, by reason of a likely disclosure of exempt information within the paragraphs of Schedule 12(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as set out below.

Minute No.	Para Nos.	Reason
845 & 846	1	Information relating to any individual

845. CHANGES TO REVENUES AND CUSTOMER SERVICES STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Revenues and Customer Services on the changes that were proposed to the staffing establishment of Revenues and Benefits. This was in response to the downturn in the economy and the significant increase in Benefit claims which also enabled the Council to make ongoing revenue savings from 2011/2012.

Changes to the employment terms and conditions of the frontline staff based at Riverside House would see alignment with other Warwick District Council frontline staff.

The allocation of funding from the Decriminalisation of Parking project should have seen additions to the staffing establishment in the Customer Service Centre and Document Management Centre. Due to an oversight it did not occur. There was no financial impact and member agreement allowed posts to be included on the permanent establishment.

RESOLVED that

- (1) the re-designating of post t03180 from Grade F Technical Support Officer to Grade G Benefits Assessment Officer until 31 March 2011 at which point the post would be deleted from the establishment, be approved;
- (2) the re-designating of post t06082 from Grade G Revenues Officer to Grade G Benefits Assessment

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

Officer until 31st, March 2011 at which point the post would be deleted from the establishment, be approved;

- (3) a change to the employment terms and conditions for posts t03070, t03075, t03080, t03085 and t03090 so that the flexi-time arrangements are removed, be approved; and
- (4) the addition of posts t07298 (1FTE) and t07299 (0.5 FTE) to the Customer Service Centre and post t07385 (25 hours per week) to the Document Management Centre, be approved.

846. REVIEW OF ESTABLISHMENT OF LEGAL SERVICES

The Committee considered a report from the Interim Head of Legal Services which proposed a re-structuring of the establishment of Legal Services to make it fit for the current demands on it, and to remove the over-reliance on agency staff.

It was recommended that there be a creation of four new posts and the deletion of three existing posts.

The establishment of Legal Services had not been reviewed for some years. The current position, with reliance on a number of agency staff was not desirable or sustainable, either in the interests of continuity of provision of the service or in budgetary terms. Furthermore, the structure was completely flat with, if all posts were filled, ten people reporting directly to the Head of Service. This was not good use of the Head of Services' time, nor does it provide opportunity for career progression or for staff to gain experience in people management.

The current level of staffing is considered to be what is necessary for the provision of an effective legal service to the authority at the present time. The only legal work which was currently outsourced related to major projects where there was neither the capacity nor expertise in house, major court cases nor hearings where Counsel would be instructed, or occasional matters in areas of law where there were no in-house expertise (e.g. employment law or procurement law).

The proposals therefore sought to retain the current level of staffing whilst addressing the issue of the flat structure.

The proposed new structure was shown at appendix 2 of the report, and in diagrammatic form at appendix 3.

RESOLVED that

- (1) a new post of Principal Solicitor be established, and once it is filled, one of the existing Solicitor posts be deleted from the establishment;

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES (Continued)

- (2) a new post of part-time Solicitor (3 days per week), be established;
- (3) a new post of part-time Admin Officer (25 hours per week), be established;
- (4) a new post of Admin Assistant / Paralegal, be established; and
- (5) the vacant posts of Legal Officer (post number S03120) and part-time Admin Assistant (post number S03125), be deleted from the establishment.

(The meeting ended at 5.30pm)