

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2010

Councillors: Paul Bryant (*Chairman*) (P), Adrian Edwards (P), Tony Linden (P), Keith Lock (*Vice-Chairman*) (P), Quentin Webb (P)

Also present: Robert O'Reilly (Head of Human Resources), Lydia Mather (Policy Officer)

PART I

15. APOLOGIES.

There were no apologies for absence received.

16. MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2009 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Item 14 Mobile and Flexible Working Procedure:

Page 3 - Fourth paragraph, sixth line, change 'there' to 'their';

Page 4 – Last paragraph, first line, change 'us' to 'use'.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no declarations of interest received.

18. DOMESTIC ABUSE – POLICY AND GUIDANCE FOR STAFF EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE.

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4) concerning approval for the new Domestic Abuse (Staff) Policy to support employees of the Council who might be the subject of domestic abuse. In response to Committee questions on the report Robert O'Reilly advised that staff might be referred to specialists such as occupational health and security might be enhanced for example when staff finished their shift. It also encouraged managers to hold confidential conversations with their staff should it be felt that there was a possibility that they were the subject of domestic abuse.

The reference in the policy to the Council's Code of Conduct was to remind employees that should they be a perpetrator of domestic abuse towards another member of staff they could be subject to disciplinary action. The policy was not a result of specific issues that had been raised but as a result of the Pemberton enquiry and the discussions of the Corporate Equalities Group. Councillor Quentin Webb advised that the Safer Select Committee had also considered the Pemberton review and would be reviewing the measures in a few months time.

The Domestic Abuse Policy was agreed subject to the date on the policy document being updated.

RESOLVED that the Domestic Abuse – Policy and Guidance for Staff Experiencing Domestic Abuse be approved.

19. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE POLICY.

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 5) concerning approval for the draft alcohol and substance misuse policy which explained the Council's approach to incidents of misuse of alcohol and drugs by employees where there was an impact upon activities of the Council. Robert O'Reilly advised that the policy dealt with employees who could be subject to disciplinary action or gross misconduct due to the misuse of alcohol or other substances as well as supporting employees who acknowledged they had an addiction. Due to objections received from the Unions the appendix of service areas subject to a no alcohol policy during working hours had not been included. Consultation was being undertaken on this matter with managers to ascertain the reasons, timescales and enforcement of jobs subject to a no alcohol policy which would then be discussed with the Unions. It was possible that paragraph 9.2 and the appendix would be removed from the policy.

The Committee discussed the potential serious nature of alcohol and substance abuse and were supportive of the Unions position on paragraph 9.2 in the policy. Robert O'Reilly provided responses to Committee questions that employees were asked about their alcohol consumption as part of a medical questionnaire during the recruitment process. Contractors were subject to the terms of the tendering process. Agency staff were subject to the service level agreement between the Council and the recruitment agency.

The Committee requested amendments to the policy to: paragraph 10.2.1, tenth bullet point to correct 'non-rotas'; and 'upon' to be removed from the glossary under Under the Influence.

RESOLVED that the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy be approved subject to the resolution of paragraph 9.2 and Appendix 1 in the policy regarding staff subject to a no alcohol policy during working hours.

20. POTENTIAL EXPANSION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE.

Robert O'Reilly gave a verbal report on the potential expansion of the terms of reference of the Personnel Committee to include new and revised Health and Safety policies and procedures. The proposal would assist in the process of approval by ensuring the interests of the Council were protected. The Terms of Reference would be subject to the approval of full Council.

RESOLVED to recommend to full Council that the terms of reference of the Personnel Committee be expanded to include new and revised Health and Safety policies and procedures.

21. UPDATE ON HR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES UNDER DEVELOPMENT

Robert O'Reilly gave a verbal update on the HR policies and procedures under development. The Committee discussed whether a policy on religious freedom and dress was required. Robert O'Reilly advised that it was not considered necessary. He would find out whether the equality policies which had been undertaken by another Head of Service had already considered the matter.

RESOLVED that the update on HR Policies and Procedures under development be noted.

22. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The Committee agreed to hold the next meeting on 28 May 2010 at 2pm.

(The meeting commenced at 2.00pm and closed at 3.00pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature: