

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2011

Councillors Present: Brian Bedwell (Substitute) (In place of Tony Linden), Paul Bryant (Chairman), Adrian Edwards and Quentin Webb

Also Present: Robert O'Reilly (Head of Human Resources) and Spencer Scott (Risk & Safety Manager), Robert Alexander (Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Tony Linden and Councillor Keith Lock

PART I

24. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

26. West Berkshire Council Health, Safety and Welfare Policy Update (PC2208)

The Committee considered a report (Agenda Item 4) concerning West Berkshire Council's Health, Safety and Welfare Police Update. The report highlighted the need to update the Council's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy in line with legislative changes. Spencer Scott informed the Committee that Corporate Board and Management Board had both seen the report, and recommended option 3 be adopted. Spencer Scott highlighted those sections of the policy that had been amended for example the new section of the policy specific to managers.

Councillor Adrian Edwards was concerned about the length and detail of the policy, and thought that a policy should be a short statement with procedures attached which he accepted could be lengthy documents. Spencer Scott replied that it was a seven page document in comparison to the eight pages of the previous version. Spencer Scott mentioned that all employers with five or more employees had to create a Health, Safety and Welfare Policy and it had to accord with a prescribed format.

Councillor Edwards asked whether CRB checks would be included within the section concerned with Elected Members. Robert O'Reilly replied that this was not a Health, Safety and Welfare Policy issue and that it fell under the remit of Human Resources. Robert informed the Committee that if a Member's role brought them into contact with children or vulnerable adult then a CRB check would be carried out, however this prescription was set out in a separate document.

Following a question from Councillor Edwards, Spencer Scott said that it was compulsory for all new staff to undertake Health & Safety training, and that managers were required to undergo further training. Staff were required to undertake a refresh course every three years.

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Councillor Edwards enquired why on page 5 it did not mention near misses, however it mentioned near misses needing to be reported to line managers. Spencer Scott said that only the most serious near misses required investigation. Councillor Paul Bryant asked if there had been a requirement to include near misses in the previous policy. Spencer Scott said that it was not necessary.

Councillor Edwards' final question was related to the policy implementation in schools. Spencer Scott informed Members that the policy was sent to schools, however because schools operated differently, the governors and head teachers would have the final sign off. And the Council could not force them to abide by its policies.

Councillor Quentin Webb asked why the document was referred to as a live document and further questioned whether it would be best to review it every three years? Spencer Scott replied that it would be reviewed annually; however it would only come back to the Personnel Committee if any major changes were made to the document.

Councillor Paul Bryant queried whether Members undertook Health and Safety training. Robert O'Reilly said it was not mandatory, but was highly recommended. Robert suggested that Spencer Scott speak to Andy Day to see if it should be made compulsorily. Councillor Bryant agreed.

Councillor Brian Bedwell enquired whether incidents were recorded in a way that would highlight whether the policy had resulted in positive outcomes. Spencer Scott said that this was difficult to do as performance management could result in certain incidents not being recorded. Councillor Bedwell said that to have it as a comparison it would be possible to compare year on year. Spencer Scott responded that there were already quarterly reports which were considered by Corporate Board and Management Board.

Councillor Paul Bryant asked apart from the change to see if Members were included in receiving compulsory training whether Members of the Committee were happy to approve the report. All Members present agreed.

27. Exclusion of Press and Public

28. Part II

29. Employment of staff aged over 65 - implications of the ending of the default retirement age on 31st October 2011

The Committee considered an exempt report (Agenda Item 7) concerning Employment of Staff aged over 65. Robert informed the Committee that Corporate Board and Management Board both supported Option 3.

Councillor Adrian Edwards said that his heart went for option one, as there were many capable people out there who could still carry on with their job. However, the Councillor said at these times his head would have to go for option 3.

At the vote all Members of the Committee voted unanimously to adopt Option 3.

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

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CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature