

STAFF COMMITTEE

14 DECEMBER 2015 - 2.30PM



PRESENT: Councillor Davis (Chairman), Councillor Mason (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Booth, Murphy, Seaton, Tierney and Yeulett.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Butcher and Mason

Sam Anthony (Head of HR & OD), David Bailey (Traveller & Diversity Manager)(Until 2.40pm), Jane Bailey (Member Services and Governance Officer), Rob Bridge (Corporate Director), Gary Garford (Corporate Director), Dan Horn (Head of Housing & Community Support) and Phil Hughes (Head of Leisure Services)

S8/15 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 28 September were confirmed and signed.

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

S9/15 COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITIES POLICY

Members considered the Comprehensive Equalities Policy presented by David Bailey.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Booth suggested that page 5 of the report, paragraph 3 is no longer relevant and that he would have expected paragraph 6 to be higher. David Bailey stated that he is happy to alter the report;
2. Councillor Booth suggested that there should be a small explanation with regards to the types of discrimination on page 7. David Bailey agreed to add some text to explain;
3. Councillor Booth asked if with regards to page 13 should they be Policy Objectives instead of promises. David Bailey stated that they are objectives but also a commitment being made to people so could be either. Councillor Yeulett stated that later in the document they are referred to as a policy so perhaps for consistency it could be altered;
4. Councillor Booth stated that the report says that we recognise our special role and responsibility in our district to challenge discrimination and promote equality of opportunity as part of our wider leadership role, and lists what we will do, it refers to using our powers but does not explain those powers. David Bailey stated that these are referring to the Local Government Act 2000 to broad sweeping powers relating to partnership working;
5. Councillor Tierney asked if any consideration had been given to positive discrimination, for example would people be given additional leave for religious holidays. David Bailey confirmed that this would have to be booked from annual leave as people would not be given additional leave;
6. Councillor Booth stated that the report says that we will take prompt action to remove offensive, obscene or racist graffiti, he suggested that following the CSR there could be changes to some services and that we might add wording to say it is good practice. David Bailey stated that under public sector equality we would have a duty to take prompt action;
7. Councillor Yeulett asked in the past have we had any incidents. Sam Anthony stated that she is not aware of any concerns reported but that the Council must ensure that we have

- the documents to comply;
8. Councillor Yeulett stated that with regards to the replies received there is a concern about the community, he asked how we promote this policy. David Bailey stated that the message is being actively promoted on community forums and using the Equality Service Champions we have active communication with people;
 9. Councillor Booth stated that the feedback mentions Equality Service Champions; he asked if this should be referenced in the policy to explain what they do. David Bailey agreed to add a specific point in the policy about the Equality Service Champions role;
 10. Councillor Booth stated that with regards to the Equalities Policy some Parish and Town Councils have it in place and some do not. He asked if many clerks make contact to ask you to look at their policy to ensure that it is in line with the District Council's Policy. David Bailey confirmed that some have contacted him, and that the offer of help is always there. Councillor Mrs Davis suggested that David Bailey should write and offer that help to the Town and Parish Councils as some may need a prompt to update their policy. David Bailey agreed.

The Staff Committee Members AGREED to approve the recommended Comprehensive Equalities Policy subject to the amendments agreed above.

S10/15 REVISED ANNUAL LEAVE POLICY

Members considered the Revised Annual Leave Policy presented by Sam Anthony.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Booth asked why on the annual leave entitlement table leave is measured as .6 hours. Rob Bridge explained that an average day is 7.4 hours, as it is one fifth of the 37 hour week, therefore .6 hours would be a proportion of a full day;
2. Councillor Tierney asked why staff have 2 more statutory days added to their leave entitlement. Sam Anthony stated that these days are set at national levels and are part of the national framework that have always been in place, she added that there would need to be a national agreement to change this;
3. Councillor Yeulett stated that in the private industry there is a 'use it or lose it' rule that says if you do not take your leave within the leave period you lose it. He asked what the rule is at Fenland. Sam Anthony stated that staff can carry over a maximum of 5 days, but these days must be used by the end of May;
4. Councillor Booth asked for clarification that CMT have a leave entitlement of 40 days. Rob Bridge confirmed that CMT do not have 40 days leave as this figure includes bank holidays and statutory days too;
5. Councillor Booth asked Sam Anthony to note some typing errors, section 3 should read 'the HR team' and the end of the first paragraph on 4.1 should be a full stop. Sam Anthony agreed to amend;
6. Councillor Booth asked if the leave year is set at a national level. Sam Anthony confirmed that it is set at a national level, April until March. Councillor Booth stated that some private sector businesses changed their leave year to avoid a spike in people trying to take all their leave before the end of the leave year, by changing it to something like the month of your birthday to balance it out.

The Staff Committee AGREED to approve the adoption of the revised Annual Leave Policy.

S11/15 WISBECH PORT MARINE SAFETY CODE - SAFETY POLICY

Members considered the Wisbech Port Marine Safety Code - Safety Policy presented by Gary Garford.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Yeulett stated that his understanding of safety management systems the designated person was always someone in the company. Gary Garford stated that the designated person is an external auditor, with expertise in port matters, that can come in and give us advice and support when required and once a year for an audit;
2. Councillor Yeulett asked what the position is of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). Gary Garford confirmed that the MCA are the organisation that we need to self-certify to in order to be compliant, they can come and carry out an inspection at any time;
3. Councillor Booth asked if there was any clause in the contract with Strategic Marine Service Ltd that says they are not liable for anything. Gary Garford stated that the consultant Strategic Marine Services Ltd have their own indemnity Insurance. He added that we are in control of Health and Safety, they are not managing this but they are the auditor and are providing an advisory service.

The Staff Committee AGREED to approve the Wisbech Port Marine Safety Code - Safety Policy.

S12/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Staff Committee were updated with the following:

Rob Bridge stated that we had confirmation last week that the Government made the final announcement with regards to Universal Credits. We go live in March 2016 with Universal Credits and members will be fully briefed closer to the time.

We are not expecting huge numbers that will be able to use this, possibly 2 or 3 a week, but we are interested in what this means for the staff that we employ as we head towards full implementation. This is a challenge that we have known was coming. The Universal Credit work is deemed by the Government to be so different that the TUPE regulations will not apply. MJ reported last week that this could mean 5000 job losses across the country. Over the next 3-5 years there is an expectation from the DWP that local authorities will manage those job reductions, they will put in place the funds to deal with redundancies as long as the local authority have done everything they can to redeploy.

This Council will look to minimise redundancies with redeployment opportunities and frozen posts where ever possible, and will update members with more information when it is available.

S13/15 LEISURE SERVICE STAFFING REVIEW

Members considered the confidential Leisure Service Staffing Review Report presented by Richard Cassidy.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses from officers.

The Staff Committee AGREED to:

- **Note the report;**
- **Note the efficiency saving of approximately £59,000 per annum achieved as a result of the proposals;**
- **Approve the proposals, including the approval of new posts and deletion of old posts.**

S14/15 LICENSING SERVICE RESTRUCTURE

Members considered the confidential Licensing Service Restructure Report presented by Richard Cassidy.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses from officers.

The Staff Committee AGREED to:

- **Note the report;**
- **Approve the proposals as outlined in the report;**
- **Approve the deleted/changed/new posts.**

S15/15 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE REVIEW

Members considered the confidential Economic Development Service Review Report presented by Gary Garford.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses from officers.

The Staff Committee AGREED to:

- **Note the report;**
- **Note that all the changes within the report will be met from the existing service budget of £52,000;**
- **Approve the proposals, as outlined in the report, including the approval of new posts and deletion of old posts.**

4.15pm

Chairman