

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 18 JULY 2025 - 3.00 PM



PRESENT: Councillor Dr H Nawaz (Chairman), Councillor J Clark, Councillor Mrs M Davis and Councillor S Imafidon

APOLOGIES: Councillor I Benney and Councillor G Christy

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Sam Anthony (Head of HR and OD), Sarah Gove (Housing & Communities Manager), Anna Goodall (Assistant Director), Marie Harley (HR Business Partner), Aaron Locks (Shared Service CCTV Manager) and Linda Albon (Member Services & Governance Officer)

EC1/25 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Davis, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and resolved that Councillor Gary Christy be elected as the Chairman of the Employment Committee for the Municipal Year 2025/26.

EC2/25 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

It was proposed by Councillor Imafidon, seconded by Councillor Mrs Davis and resolved that Councillor Nawaz be elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Employment Committee for the Municipal Year.

In the absence of Councillor Christy, Councillor Nawaz chaired the meeting.

EC3/25 **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held 12 September 2024 were agreed and signed.

EC4/25 **DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT (EMPLOYEE) POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Members considered the Domestic Abuse Support (employee) Policy and Procedure report presented by Sarah Gove.

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

- Councillor Mrs Davis asked if there are any scenarios when protecting a victim may put the Council at risk. Sarah Gove replied that the team would work with HR to ensure the Council's interests are also protected.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how the Council's reputational risk would be managed if the person causing harm was an employee and the abuse became public. Sam Anthony advised that confidential information would not be shared, and the Council would work closely with the individual and victim.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how data protection is ensured when recording disclosures and how information is kept confidential. Sarah Gove responded that anyone who uses the Housing Service could be for any number of elements, not just housing advice. All information is confidential and secure to the department on their internal system. Sam Anthony added that if a disclosure is received, it will be recorded on file but kept under lock and key, however the

Council has a duty to act once they know, so it would be discussed with that individual.

- Councillor Mrs Davis asked what support is given beyond emergency situations, for example can a staff member be given extra leave or flexible working hours? Sam Anthony responded that there are several avenues of support such as compassionate leave, hybrid working, mental health support and the Employee Assistant Programme to name a few. Sarah Gove added that DAHA accreditation will give the team a comprehensive list of specialist organisations that they could work with, along with HR.
- Councillor Imafidon asked for clarification on who is referred to as customers. Sam Anthony said that anyone making an approach, including staff, would be classed as a client.
- Councillor Nawaz asked what the significance and advantage of DAHA accreditation would be. Sarah Gove replied that it is a positive national scheme, and accreditation would show that the Council takes domestic abuse seriously; it would also highlight that the authority is a creditable organisation, offering a very high standard of customer service.
- Councillor Imafidon asked how long the process will take, what the costs are and what impact would local government reorganisation have on the accreditation. Sarah Gove advised that accreditation lasts three years, which is timely in respect of LGR, but Peterborough are also seeking the accreditation. In terms of cost, it is being funded through a community safety partnership grant, which she believes is £3,000.
- Councillor Nawaz said he notes this is an in-house provision and asked if all staff would be trained and if any action could be taken to assist a Fenland resident or user of council services. Sarah Gove said there are two elements to the accreditation; this report covers all staff across the organisation, but accreditation is for the benefit of both internal and external customers. If the policy is agreed today and then at Cabinet next Monday, that information will be published on the Council's website. She added that unfortunately domestic abuse is one of the top three reasons that people contact the service.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Davis, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and AGREED the Domestic Abuse Support (employee) Policy and Procedure.

EC5/25 HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

Members considered the Health and Safety Annual Report presented by Sam Anthony and Aarron Locks.

Aarron Locks explained that there is to be a review of the incident investigation process because there is evidence of inconsistency in how accidents have been investigated across the Council. The review will provide a clear structure to support managers more efficiently, but also with a view to inviting an external training provider to deliver managers with the tools they need to effectively investigate incidents concisely and accurately. Sam Anthony added that whilst the Council's health and safety performance is very good, this will enhance it even more.

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

- Councillor Mrs Davis asked how the effectiveness of e-learning is measured beyond completion. Sam Anthony responded that completion is tracked for the workforce, and during accident investigations will make sure that those individuals have completed their mandatory training, what they have learned from it and recommendations going forward. Aarron Locks added that when an incident happens within a service area, the training for that team will be reviewed and see if there is a link with the number of incidents based on lack of training within that.
- Councillor Mrs Davis asked what governance controls are in place to ensure the audit and training programmes are in place and if tracking is the same across the board. Sam Anthony confirmed that the new system tracks who has completed the training and by when. This information is fed back to the Audit and Risk Management Committee.
- Councillor Imafidon noted that there are six first-aid trained staff at Fenland Hall and one at each of the business centres at South Fens and the Boat House. He asked what would happen

if either of the first aiders at the two business centres were absent, leaving them without any first aid cover. Sam Anthony responded that there is no legal obligation on the Council to provide a first aider at the business centres, but there will be someone on site with emergency first aid experience.

- Councillor Mrs Davis said she noted only one near miss recorded on the accident report and asked how the Council can get staff to take reporting near misses as seriously as accidents. Aaron Locks said that he would also expect to see a higher number of near misses reported across the authority and will be pushing this to become part of FDC's culture. In the meantime, the focus will be on encouraging staff working in high-risk areas to report such incidents.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Davis, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and AGREED to note the Council's Health and Safety performance for 2024/25.

EC6/25 ECONOMIC GROWTH SERVICE - CONFIDENTIAL

Members considered the Economic Growth Service report presented by Anna Goodall.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Davis, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and AGREED the report recommendations.

(Members resolved to exclude the public for this item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2, 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

3.57 pm

Chairman