

Minutes of Personnel Committee

Meeting Date: Wednesday, 21 November 2012 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor R Elms (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	B Hilton
P Dowson	D T Smith
T Hill	D Taylor

In attendance: Chief Executive, Head of HR and Personnel Officers x 2.

464 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Brunskill and A Yearning.

465 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

466 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

467 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items of public participation

468 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports from representatives on Outside Bodies.

469 CRB UPDATE

The Personnel Officer updated Members on changes to the Criminal Records Bureau and the introduction of the combined Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). She explained the background legislation governing the CRB and the implications for the authority. It was confirmed that taxi drivers would continue to be dealt with by the Legal section, with the Personnel section handling disclosures required for people working for the authority within 'regulated activity'. The Personnel Officer advised Members of the current cost structure and confirmed that disclosures for volunteers would continue to be at no cost to the authority.

It was noted that following changes to the definitions of 'regulated activity', the list of eligible posts within the authority had significantly reduced and that it was now a criminal offence to apply for a disclosure where the applicant did not meet the eligibility criteria.

The possibility of portable disclosures remained under consideration by the CRB/DBS but additional costs would be likely.

The Chief Executive commented on recent issues in the national press surrounding inappropriate behaviour at work and reminded Members that the Whistleblowing Policy was available for staff to use, should they have any concerns.

470 USE OF COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT POLICY

The Head of HR presented her written report to Members requesting approval of an Electronic Communications Policy for the Council. She explained that the policy would sit alongside and complement other policies relating to the use of IT and associated systems. It was noted that the policy explained what was required from employees when using communications equipment at work and included guidelines for using social networking and the action the authority may take should an employee make inappropriate comments relating to the authority or their colleagues, either inside or outside work.

The Head of HR confirmed the document would be given to staff at induction it would also be publicised in Backchat and on the Intranet for existing staff.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the Use of Communications Equipment Policy as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report.

471 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the fact that the following item of business be an Exempt Information Under Category 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

472 REQUEST FOR FLEXI RETIREMENT

Consideration was given to the request from a Senior Accountant for flexible retirement. The Chief Executive explained the changes to the pension scheme which allowed for flexible retirement without any additional costs to the authority. This enabled employees to reduce their working hours over a period of time. This helped the authority retain skills and knowledge and allow for training of a successor. The Head of HR confirmed the arrangement would be subject to finding a suitable job share partner. Members agreed that the request was reasonable and offered a good mentoring opportunity to ensure a smooth transition of skills and knowledge between the postholder and the new job share partner.

RESOLVED: That Committee approve the request for flexible retirement as detailed in the report subject to finding a suitable job share partner.

473 QUALIFICATION TRAINING

Consideration was given to the written report of the Personnel Officer providing Members with details of staff currently undertaking training courses which would lead to a recognised qualification. She confirmed that three members of staff were currently studying for a qualification.

The Personnel Officer drew Members' attention to the trainee Building Surveyor who had recently completed his studies, having achieved a First Class Honours Degree in Building Surveying.

RESOLVED: That a letter of congratulations be sent to the trainee Building Surveyor.

474 UPDATE ON NATIONAL PAY NEGOTIATIONS

The Head of HR updated Members on the latest developments in respect of current National Pay negotiations. She confirmed that there had been a freeze on Local Government pay since 2009 and that the latest negotiations related to the financial year 2013/2014. She explained the protocol surrounding national negotiations and the main points from the feedback following consultation meetings within the North West region. She confirmed that feedback from all regions would be reported back to national negotiation team in London and expected all feedback to be completed by Christmas.

There was some discussion regarding the national minimum wage and the 'living wage' with the Head of HR advising Members that four North West authorities had signed up to the 'living wage'. The Chief Executive was aware of this but noted that authorities would need to finance any resulting increases in pay and changes to the pay line.

475 MEMBER AND STAFF TRAINING

Consideration was given to the written report of the Personnel Officer which detailed training courses approved since the last meeting. It was noted that a considerable proportion of training had been delivered in-house and Members commented that recent in-house training on standing orders had been very informative, although general attendance from Members had been less than hoped for.

476 APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Consideration was given to the written report of the Personnel Officer informing Members of appointments and resignations that had taken place since the last meeting. She explained the background to the new appointments detailed in the report and advised Members verbally of an appointment that had been made the previous week. Members' attention was drawn to three members of staff who would be retiring before the end of 2012 and their service was noted. The requests to reappoint were explained by the Personnel Officer.

RESOLVED: That

1. letters be sent to the retirees detailed in the report; and
2. Committee approve the requests to reappoint as outlined in the report.

The meeting closed at 7.28pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).