



**Minutes of a meeting of the Employment Committee
held at the Town Hall, Peterborough on 24 November 2011**

Members Present: Councillors Benton (Chairman), Cllr Lamb (Vice Chairman) Holdich, Swift, Khan, Fitzgerald, Seaton

Officers Present: Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive
Mike Kealey, Head of Human Resources
Lisa Trowbridge, Senior HR Advisor Policy Development
Amy Brown, Solicitor
Andy Baker, Internal Health and Safety Adviser
Mark Burn, Unison Representative
Karen S Dunleavy, Governance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 September 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2011 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. Appointment of Interim Director of Children's Services

The Committee received a report from the Chief Executive which sought its approval to appoint Mr Malcolm Newsam as Interim Director of Children's Services and the delegation of the agreement of Mr Newsam's terms and conditions, and any changes thereto, to the Chief Executive.

Members were advised that the Council had a statutory obligation to appoint a Director of Children's Services under s18 of the Children Act 2004. At the previous meeting of the Employment Committee, Members had been advised that ongoing discussions were being held with Mr Newsam to secure his services upon completion of his current appointment in November 2011.

Members were advised that Mr Newsam specialised in the turnaround of failing departments and had the support of both Ofsted and the Department of Education (DfE) as a suitable appointment for Peterborough.

The Chief Executive addressed the Committee and gave an overview of Mr Newsam's previous engagements and achievements. Members were informed that Mr Newsam would work to achieve the required improvements identified within the Ofsted report and the Council's improvement plan, and would assist the Chief Executive in the appointment of a permanent Director of Children's Services.

The following questions, observations and comments were made by Members:

- Members commented that the cost of the appointment had been reported somewhat negatively in the press, however the cost of ensuring the safeguarding of the children of Peterborough could not be measured in monetary terms and it was important that the right person was appointed.
- Members sought clarification over why an interim appointment was being explored rather than appointing a permanent Executive Director of Children's Services? *The Chief Executive advised Members that the current Interim Executive Director of Children's Services, Mr Adrian Loades, was due to end his contract with Peterborough City Council and a recruitment exercise to appoint a permanent Executive Director, would take six months or more.*
- The Committee recognised that employing talented Social Services Directors nationally was a difficult task.
- Members wished it to be noted that any decisions made to approve the appointment of Officers were done so as a Committee on behalf of the Council.
- Members commented that there was a responsibility under the Corporate Parenting Group (CPG) umbrella for all Members to attend CPG meetings. These meetings allowed for officers to be questioned on all aspects of the services provided for children in care.
- The Chief Executive advised Members that Mr Newsam would also assist with the appointment of a permanent successor to the post of Executive Director of Children's Services.

The Unison Representative addressed the Committee and highlighted a number of concerns, including the number of redundancies faced by staff at Peterborough City Council, and:

- The importance of the continuity of service and best practice for Children's Services;
- That the timescales to appoint a permanent successor to the post of Executive Director of Children's Services were realistic;
- Whether the two specialists, appointed by Mr Loades, would be leaving PCC; and
- Whether Mr Newsam would be appointing two specialists from his previous appointment at Kent.

The Chief Executive provided the following responses:

- The process to find a successor for the Executive Director of Children's Services was intended to take six months; and
- Any specialist appointments would be for Mr Newsam to assess once in post. Members would be advised accordingly.

The Unison Representative wished it to be noted that gratitude was extended to Mr Loades for his achievements since his appointment at Peterborough City Council.

- Concerns were raised as to whether the proper processes had been followed to replace the Interim Director of Children's Services, and had the appointment been informed through the scrutiny process? *The Chairman of the Employment Committee advised that Members had been informed by the Chief Executive at the previous meeting of Employment Committee that Mr Loades' appointment was to be a temporary one only and that plans were underway to find a replacement.*

- Members commented that they supported the Unison Representatives comments.
- Members requested that going forward, relevant Committees and Group Leaders be kept up to date with regards to all aspects of Children's Services.
- Members sought confirmation from the Chief Executive as to whether she was happy to take on the delegation of the agreement of the terms and conditions of Mr Newsam's appointment? *The Chief Executive confirmed that she was happy to take on responsibility for the delegation.*

The Chief Executive advised Members that going forward they would be kept up to date with the progress being made within Children's Services and they would also be consulted in order to capture the work being carried out in their communities.

RESOLVED:

The Employment Committee:

- 1) Appointed Mr Malcolm Newsam as Interim Director of Children's Services; and
- 2) Delegated the agreement of Mr Newsam's terms and conditions, and any changes thereto, to the Chief Executive.

Reasons for the decision:

The Council had a statutory duty under s18 of the Children's Services Act 2004, to appoint a Director of Children's Services.

5. Changes to Employee Policies and Procedures

The Committee received a report and presentation from the Interim Head of Human Resources, on a number of employment policies, which had been shared with the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) and approved in principal subject to the Employment Committee's approval.

The report sought the agreement of the Committee to implement changes to employee terms and conditions as appended to the report, thus ensuring that the Council maintained up to date and legal employment policies.

The Employment Committee was requested to agree and implement the following employment/Health and Safety policies:

- i) Recruitment Policy;
- ii) Social Media Policy; and
- iii) Violence at Work Policy

The following questions observations, comments were made by Members:

- Members sought clarification over the offer of employment being made subject to a satisfactory medical? *The Senior HR Advisor for Policy Development advised Members that the policy was due to be updated following a change in the Discrimination Act and that a person had to be fit and well before accepting an appointment of employment.*
- Members sought clarification over Peterborough City Council's definition of personal use of social media and whether social media should only be used in a professional capacity? *The Head of Human Resources advised Members that the policy was*

intended to make staff aware of what they were writing on social media sites and to be mindful of their duty not to put the Council into disrepute.

- Members sought clarification over whether staff should be accessing social media on a personal basis, whilst carrying out their contracted duties? *The Head of Human Resources advised Members that staff were entitled to access the social media sites over their break periods. Members were also advised that it was the responsibility of the Service Manager to monitor use and to highlight any excessive use within work periods and that a pragmatic approach was needed in monitoring.*
- Members commented that the wording surrounding acceptable use of social media and when it was to be accessed should be made clearer for employees. In addition Members advised that clarification should be provided to all employees on the definition of excessive use of social media.

The Unison Representative expressed his gratitude to the Health and Safety Team, Members and Senior Officers for the work undertaken to update the Health and Safety policies, and that the time and effort which had been demonstrated in implementing the updates should be recognised.

- Members sought clarification over how the update to Health and Safety policies would be communicated to employees? *Members were advised that the intention was for the Health and Safety team to run a campaign to communicate the changes and conduct audits to raise awareness.*
- Members sought clarification over whether Health and Safety training would be offered to all employees or only to those most at risk? *Members were advised that each department would be assessed through the Health and Safety Committee and that an action plan would be produced to introduce the appropriate levels of Health and Safety practices.*

RESOLVED:

The Employment Committee agreed to implement the following policies:

- i) Recruitment Policy;
- ii) Social Media Policy; and
- iii) Violence at Work Policy

Reasons for the decision:

The replacement of current policies and the implementation of new policies would help to ensure that the Council maintained up to date and legal employment practices. It would also ensure compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and subordinate health and safety legislation and approved codes of practice and guidance with respect to the health and safety at work of employees.

Chairman
3.00pm – 3.20pm