

**MINUTES OF THE EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT 7PM, ON
12 SEPTEMBER 2019
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Brown (Chairman) Holdich (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Fitzgerald, Hemraj, Jamil, Yurgutene and Wiggin

Officers Present: Karen Craig Senior Rewards Officer
Mandy Pullen Assistant Director HR & OD
Dan Kalley Senior Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 AUGUST 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 August 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. REVISED EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

The Employment Committee received a report in relation to revised employment policies.

The HR Assistant Director introduced the report and confirmed that the policies had been approved previously by the Committee. The policies that were in front of members contained a number of amendments that needed approval before being implemented.

The Senior Rewards Advisor went through each policy separately and answered any questions on each in turn.

Infection Control Policy:

Members were informed that HR looked after this area in conjunction with Occupational Health and Health and Safety. The policy had been updated to take into account best practice. This included updating the policy on different infectious diseases as defined by Public Health England and greater clarification on the use of sharps bins. This policy intended to increase the awareness of line managers and their responsibilities.

The Employment Committee debated the policy and in summary the key points highlighted included:

- Pest Control was now covered by animal welfare. It was anticipated that some staff would have to deal with animals but that this would be rare.

Overpayments Policy

The updated policy set out how the Council was to claim back any overpayments made to staff while still in employment, or if they were to leave the organisation. It was important that all staff were made aware of the policies and procedures, this included a standard letter that would go to any employee that left the organisation and who had an overpayment still standing. If the final overpayment could not be taken from the final salary then this would be passed to finance to raise an invoice.

The Employment Committee debated the policy and in summary the key points highlighted included:

- There had not been many examples of overpayments made. Those that had been made were not usually the fault of the Council or the Employee.

Adoption Policy

The Council had updated the policy to include fostering for adoption which allowed prospective adopters the opportunity to foster children before formal adoption. The Government had now allowed this period to be part of the adoption period. There were a few other minor changes, including updates to leave as this was not an easy aspect of the policy to define.

Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary policy itself had not had any changes made. However, after consultations with the trade unions and managers the disciplinary procedures had been updated. The two most prominent revisions were namely around the suspension risk assessment and whether there were any steps that could be put in place before formally suspending an employee, such as being moved to another team,, this was to try and minimise suspension wherever possible. There would still be some cases where suspension was necessary and the policy allowed for this to still be the case. The other significant change was around verbal warnings, it was current practice for HR to advise on having informal discussions and for these to be recorded with a review date. Once the review date had come round and there had been improvements then the note would be removed from the employee's file. If no improvements had been made then the note could be used in formal procedures.

The Employment Committee **RESOLVED** to agree the amendments to the employment policies.

At this point Councillor Wiggin joined the meeting

5. COMMITTEE START TIME 2020-21

The Employment Committee received a report in relation to Committees being able to choose their own start time for the Municipal Year 2020-21 and each year following.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer explained that Full Council had agreed the changes in the Council's Constitution to allow Committees to choose their own start times. The Committee had previously met at 3pm and this had changed to 7pm a number of years ago.

The Employment Committee debated the report and in summary the key points highlighted included:

- There were benefits for those Councillors who worked and had to travel a long distance for the meeting start time to stay at 7pm.
- In order to line up working with Cambridgeshire County Council it was suggested that the meetings mirrored the 10am or 2pm start times.
- Keeping the Town Hall open was costing money and it would be beneficial to save costs by bringing meeting times forward.
- A suggestion of having the meetings at 5pm would allow Councillors who worked to be able to come to the meeting after work and then be able to go home to their families.

A motion was proposed and seconded for the meeting to start at 5pm.

The Employment Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously) that the Employment Committee meeting would start at 5pm for the Municipal Year 2020-21.

Chairman
7.00pm – 7.19pm

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