

**Minutes of a meeting of the Staff and Pensions Committee held on
14 October 2010**

Present:

Councillors Alan Farnell (Chair)
Peter Butlin
Jim Foster
Eithne Goode
Colin Hayfield
Brian Moss

Officers:

David Carter, Strategic Director Customers,
Workforce and Governance
John Betts, Head of Corporate Finance

Martyn Thompson, Deputy Head of Human
Resources (Performance Management) for items 2
and 3.

Bob Perks, Head of Human Resources

Ruth Pickering (Corporate Health, Safety and Well
Being Manager) for items 2 and 3.

Janet Purcell, Executive and Member Support
Manager

Colin Williams, Consultant Pay & Conditions Team

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

None.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2010

Resolved

That the minutes be agreed, subject to deletion of the reference to Cllr Farnell having declared an interest.

2. Employee Absence Management

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance that set out statistics on sickness absence for 2009/10 and for the first quarter of 2010/11 based on a rolling 12 month period from July 2009 to June 2010. It was noted that the levels of sickness were similar to other local authorities and that the 8.32 FTE days per employee during 2009/10 compares favourably to previous years and shows a downward trend since 2005/06. The Committee were advised that there is, however, some difficulty in ensuring consistency of reporting, given the changes in functions between directorates (for example libraries move into CWG).

The Committee were advised that the top reasons for absence continues to be musculo-skeletal disorders (MSD) and stress/mental health. MSD is highest in adults social care and catering, cleaning and caretaking. Stress/mental health related absence is also highest in adult social care and children in need. Members asked what measures were being taken to assist staff, particularly in view of the possible increase in stress that may occur due to changes in staffing levels and concern regarding job security. Ruth Pickering reported that managers were being given training on recognising and managing stress at work and that a policy on stress management was to be launched to coincide with National Stress Awareness Day (3 November). In terms of long term sickness (20 days or more) occupational health advisors, now based in Shire Hall, were involved and a case management approach was taken.

Resolved

That the Committee notes the latest performance information in relation to the management of sickness absence.

3. Health & Safety Annual Report 2009/10

The Committee welcomed Ruth Pickering to the meeting. Ruth had been appointed as Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager, bringing together a number of inter-related functions and ensuring a corporate approach to these issues. The Committee considered the Health and Safety statistics for 2009/10 which showed an increase of 3% in incidents compared to the previous year but remained lower than in 2007/8 and 2006/7. The highest increase is in 'violent incidents' although this could be due to the launch of the personal safety policy and guides which emphasises the requirement to report. The Committee considered and agreed the priorities and targets proposed for 2010/11 (section 7 of the report).

Resolved

That the Committee note the report and endorse the priorities set out in the report.

4. Items Containing Exempt Information

Resolved

That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the item mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2010

Resolved

That the minutes be agreed, subject to deletion of the reference to Cllr Farnell having declared an interest.

All officers left the meeting for item 6 aside from:

David Carter and Bob Perks who gave advice and then left the meeting during the discussion and consideration of the item.

John Betts stayed to give any further advice and Janet Purcell stayed to record the decision.

6. Workforce Planning

The Committee considered a report from the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance that set out options for workforce planning.

The Committee were advised of the views and recommendations from Cabinet who had met prior to this meeting.

Following discussion the Committee agreed with the views expressed by Cabinet and resolved as set out in the exempt minutes.

7. Pay and Conditions Review Phase 2

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance which summarised the results of consultation with the workforce on the outcomes of the Pay & Conditions Phase 2 Review. Councillor Alan Farnell advised that the report and recommendations had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting immediately prior to this meeting and Cabinet had supported the recommendations

The Committee agreed the recommendations as set out in the exempt minutes.

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Chair of Committee

The Committee rose at 4.40 p.m.