

**Minutes of a Meeting of the  
Employment Committee held at  
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath  
House, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15  
3HD on 28 March 2024**

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+ Cllr David Whitcroft (Chair)  
+ Cllr Shaun Macdonald (Vice Chair)

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| + Cllr Alan Ashbery     | + Cllr Josh Thorne                |
| + Cllr Lisa Finan-Cooke |                                   |
|                         | + Present                         |
|                         | - Apologies for absence presented |

Members in Attendance: Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Nirmal Kang, Cllr Valerie White, Cllr Richard Wilson, Sally Kipping, Julie Simmonds and James Hall.

Officers Present: Sally Kipping, Julie Simmonds and James Hall.

### **27/EC Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 1 February 2024 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **28/EC Email Security Policy**

The Committee considered a new Email Security Policy. The policy had been developed as an Information Management policy rather than Human Resources (HR) policy but had been brought before the Employment Committee due to the dependence of staff behaviour to ensure email security in the council.

Members were informed that Cyber Risk was highlighted as one of the Corporate Risks on the Corporate Risk Register which was the responsibility of officers to mitigate. It was agreed that the policy would be subject to review in 12 months' time and that the policy would be supported with training for staff.

It was confirmed to the Committee that the policy would apply to Councillors and that the training provision would be extended to them. It was agreed that the policy would be revised to clarify that Councillor email accounts would be inaccessible six months after leaving their post and that this was separate to the email retention policy that stated emails from former Councillors would be retained for up to four years.

The Committee was informed that the training programme invested in included the use of fake Phishing emails sent to staff and provide guidance for staff who followed the false link provided. Members recognised the value in this approach but concerns were raised about such emails becoming antagonistic or taking too much staff time.

The use of sensitivity labels in documents distributed by email was proposed and Officers agreed to look into it.

It was noted that Section 15 of the policy needed to be rephrased to clarify that council staff would not be able to access the email accounts of Members. It was recognised that the Councillor Code of Conduct would need to be revised following the adoption of the policy.

The Committee was informed that the Council was planning to migrate to a new storage management system over the coming 18 months and that the current system was effective.

**RESOLVED that the Email Security Policy, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, as amended, be adopted.**

## **29/EC Disciplinary Policy**

The Committee considered proposed revisions to the Disciplinary Policy. The policy was presented as one of the most important in the Council, which had last been reviewed in 2018.

Members were pleased with section 6.3 of the policy outlining there was no requirement for an accompaniment to mediation meetings except for specific adjustments, but noted that it was not clear if this rule applied to all meetings referenced in the policy.

It was clarified to Members following several questions raised, that Employees subject to a Hearing would be given a minimum of 5 clear working days' notice in writing of such a meeting, which would detail the nature of the alleged misconduct in writing alongside any additional relevant information.

Following a point raised by a Member, it was agreed that section 7.3 would have a new line added outlining that staff were not required to be accompanied in an investigation into the circumstances of a contravention of Council policy or rules.

**RESOLVED that the revised Disciplinary Policy, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, as amended, be adopted.**

## **30/EC Grievance Policy**

The Committee considered an update to the Grievance Policy. The policy was presented as one of the most important in the Council. The policy was last brought to the Committee in 2018 and no changes to the law had affected the update.

It was noted that the Chair had provided feedback which would be incorporated in the policy. An agreed revision was to clarify that only an employee of the council could raise a grievance.

Members were informed that a time limit on grievances had been introduced which meant staff could only raise a grievance within 6 months since the final act that has led to the staff member being aggrieved. Other policies including the Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and the Speak Up Policy existed to allow for historic issues to be raised.

Following a point raised by Members it was agreed that sections 8.3 and 15.7 of the policy would be revised to include that the employee who was the subject of the grievance would be informed in writing the outcome of a hearing, not just the employee who raised the grievance.

In response to a question raised, Officers confirmed that there was no recording of informal conversations had between staff and the Human Resources team. Staff were welcome to request conversations be recorded if they wanted, but Officers stressed that a deliberate effort was made to not record informal discussions with staff.

The Committee agreed that the use of workflows to visualise how key policies operate would be helpful for staff navigating relevant issues. Officers confirmed that as such workflows would reflect the existing policies, they policies did not need to be brought back to the Committee.

Following a point raised by Members, it was agreed that the wording of section 16.5 would be updated to maintain consistency with the previously adopted Disciplinary Policy, that an employee would have 10 working days from the date of the outcome letter received, to lodge an appeal.

**RESOLVED that the revised Grievance Policy, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, as amended, be adopted.**

### **31/EC Casual & Temporary Working Policy**

The Committee considered proposed revisions to the Casual & Temporary Working Policy. The Committee was informed that the policy had been reviewed subject to new case law surrounding casual workers in the UK and that the policy was aimed at supporting managers to understand the differing types of employee at the Council.

Officers noted formatting issues on page 10 of the policy as well as a typo to correct. Officers also confirmed to Members that the policy would go live following approval that evening.

**RESOLVED that the revised Casual & Temporary Working Policy, as attached as Annex A to the agenda report, as amended, be adopted.**

**32/EC Work Programme**

The Committee considered the draft Work Programme for 2024/25.

**RESOLVED that the Work Programme for the 2024/25 municipal year, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, be agreed.**

Chair