

**Minutes of a Meeting of the
Employment Committee held at
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath
House, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15
3HD on 1 February 2024**

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

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

Substitutes: Cllr Mary Glauert (In place of Cllr Alan Ashbery).

Members in Attendance: Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath, Cllr Sarbie Kang, Cllr Pat Tedder and Cllr Richard Wilson.

Officers Present: James Hall, Sally Kipping, Julie Simmonds, Rachel Whillis.

17/EC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

18/EC Speak Up Policy and Procedure

The Committee considered proposed revisions to the Speak Up Policy and Procedure. This policy was brought to the Committee for an annual review and update.

It was recognised that feedback on the policy had been received from the Chair, which highlighted an error in Section 8.1 of the policy. A review had been conducted with the Monitoring Officer and a conclusion was reached that the correction of this error was a procedural change but not a material policy change. Therefore, the policy was not required to be submitted to the Joint Staff Consultative Group for another review. The Chair of the Committee asked for the Chair of the Consultative Group to be formally advised of this change.

RESOLVED that the revised Speak Up Policy and Procedure, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, as amended, be adopted.

19/EC Politically Restricted Posts and Guidance

The Committee considered a Politically Restricted Posts and Guidance Policy. Statute around such posts and activities were in place which did not require a policy within the organisation. However, minor incidents had been identified where such a policy would have provided information and support to staff to clarify which roles were politically restricted.

The policy provided a list of roles that were politically restricted and this information would be adopted into the role profiles in the organisation. Additionally current staff in those roles would be contacted to clarify what the guidance was and how it would apply to them.

A question was asked surrounding the role of social media and how activities online would be interpreted from the legislation introduced in 1990. It was deemed appropriate to amend the existing Social Media Policy to outline what behaviour would be appropriate for staff in politically restricted posts. It was therefore agreed to review the Social Media Policy later on in the 2024/25 year to cross reference the Politically Restricted Posts and Guidance Policy as necessary.

In response to a follow up question, the Committee was informed that prior case law which affirmed that 'liking' or 'forwarding' a post was effectively a comment. Staff contacted following the adoption of this policy would be informed of this position.

RESOLVED that the Politically Restricted Posts and Guidance, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, be adopted.

20/EC Carers' Policy

The Committee considered a new Carers' Policy. The policy was one of three linked closely to the People Strategy approved by the Committee in October 2023. The Carers' Policy was developed to provide officers who were carers with the relevant information on how to provide care whilst in work.

Members were informed that the Joint Staff Consultative Group had noted that the Carers' Policy did not recommend paid leave for carers. The Committee was advised that the Carers' Policy and the existing Family Friendly Policy, which did outline dependence leave, were aligned and that revisions to both policies would be brought back to the Committee in the summer.

The Committee recognised that legislation related to carers was expected to emerge in April. The proposed policy was expected to align with this new legislation but if they did not, any updates would be reflected when the policy was brought back to the Committee in the summer.

A question was asked if the wording of section 5.1 Emergency Time Off could be re-worded due to the language used being considered harsh. The Committee was informed that this language reflected the legal position for employees but it was agreed that an additional sentence could be included to reference other forms of paid leave available.

RESOLVED that the Carers' Policy, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, as amended, be adopted.

21/EC Recruitment Policy

The Committee considered an update to the Recruitment Policy. The policy was one of three linked closely to the People Strategy approved by the Committee in October 2023. Members were informed that training would be provided to managers following the adoption of the policy.

The updated Recruitment Policy was developed to provide managers with greater options for filling vacant posts such as the use of career grades, where vacancies are filled with new staff alongside a development plan to grow into the role, or secondments rather than hiring like for like.

It was noted that a flow chart provided in Appendix 2 of the policy did not reflect double approval related to roles. It was agreed that this would be revised.

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

22/EC Agile Working Policy

The Committee considered an update to the Agile Working Policy. The policy was one of three linked closely to the People Strategy approved by the Committee in October 2023. The policy had been written to reflect the conditions of the pandemic and the proposed updates sought to make the policy more appropriate post pandemic.

The Committee was informed that the Joint Staff Consultative Group had discussed how best to reflect breaks in work during the day, which had led to a revision to the policy that staff were to book any break time on the iTrent system, used to reflect staff time.

RESOLVED that the revised Agile Working Policy, as attached at Annex A to the agenda report, be adopted.

23/EC Pensions Discretions Policy

The Committee considered the Pensions Discretion Policy. This policy was brought to the committee for an annual review and update.

Members were informed that each pension fund was required to have a discretionary policy, which needed to be kept under annual review. No changes were made to the 2023/24 policy and the Committee noted that no changes were made in the prior year. This was because no changes had been made within the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) which meant no revisions were required to the policy at Surrey Heath.

RESOLVED that no amendments be made to the current Pensions Discretions Policy.

24/EC Work Programme

The Committee discussed its work programme for remainder of the 2023/24 year. It was noted that that final meeting of the Committee would take place on 28

March 2024, not 7 March 2024 which was the next scheduled meeting of the Joint Staff Consultative Group. The Committee also noted several items yet to be scheduled but these were expected to be brought to the Committee in June 2024.

RESOLVED that the work programme for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year, as set out at Annex A to the agenda report, be agreed.

25/EC Exclusion of Press and Public

In accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the ground that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as set out below:

Item	Paragraph(s)
26/EC	1. Information relating to any individual.

26/EC Annual Report

The Committee received a report from the Leader on the appraisal he had undertaken with the Chief Executive. Members noted the Leader's report and the performance against agreed objectives.

The Committee noted that the procedures followed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive in respect of the appraisal process were both detailed and wholly appropriate.

Chair