



Rutland County Council

Catmose Oakham Rutland LE15 6HP
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Minutes of a Meeting of the **EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland on **Tuesday 6 May 2014** at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Mr K A Bool – in the Chair
Mr J R Munton
Mr M D A Pocock
Miss G Waller

OFFICERS Ms C Snell Head of Human Resources
PRESENT: Miss S Bingham Corporate Support Officer

APOLOGIES: Mr G Plews
Mrs C Emmett

1030 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in respect of items on the agenda.

1031 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Special Employment and Appeals Committee held on 5 November 2013, copies of which had been previously circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

1032 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions from members of the public had been received.

1033 HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES

Report No 118/2014 from the Director for Resources, which presented a number of Human Resources Policies that, had been reviewed and updated was received.

The following policies had been put forward for consideration:

- Absence Management Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Probation Policy
- Job Evaluation Appeals
- Pension Discretions
- Early Retirement Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. All the above policies have undergone the following checks:
 - Agreed terms of reference
 - Draft policies reviewed by Senior Management Team for approval
 - Agreement with the trade unions
 - Research/best practice and legal advice

- ii. Delegated authority has been given to the Employment and Appeals Panel to approve these policies. There was no requirement for the policies to go to Full Council.
- iii. Managers will attend policy briefing sessions to enable them to apply policies correctly. Training on managing absence will be mandatory for all Managers. Managers will also have the support of the Human Resources Team for further advice and reference.
- iv. New staff are not expected to read all Human Resources policies but copies of all policies are available on the Intranet. They are required to sign and return their individual Statement of Written Particulars and the Code of Conduct before their start date.

Absence Management Policy

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. It was confirmed that paragraphs 16, 17 and 18 were reviewed to clarify procedures and process. The Absence Management Policy now mirrors other Human Resources policies such as Capability Policy. Senior Management Team requested that this section of the policy is reviewed after 1 year due to the changes in the above paragraphs.
- ii. Absence triggers have reduced from 4 to 3 instances of sickness absence or more during any 6 month rolling period, or 10 days or more during any 12 month rolling period.
- iii. It was confirmed that provisions for absence due to carer responsibilities are outlined in the Umbrella Leave Policy and Flexible Working Policy.
- iv. Emergency absence can be retrospectively authorised with a medical certificate.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. Concern was raised regarding the wording of paragraph 6.3, this was to be amended to include 'this includes weekends and non-working days'.
- ii. Concern was raised that the example used in Paragraph 9.1 was unsuitable. A more suitable example to be used not referring to new mothers.
- iii. Clarification was given to paragraph 13.3, not all roles lend themselves to working from home, and therefore, this should not be used to avoid sickness absence.
- iv. Clarification was given to the term 'elected surgery' (Paragraph 15.2). This is surgery such as 'cosmetic surgery' guidance would be sort from Occupational Health when necessary.
- v. Concern was raised that the length of absence that could trigger more investigation could differ greatly. The use of the triggers is to alert managers to a potential issue and may not result in further action being taken.

It was requested that additional wording be added to paragraph 20.6 reflect the appeals process should the case be against an Assistant Director.

Grievance Policy

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. It was confirmed that the previous Grievance Policy and Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination policy has been combined into this new policy document.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. Concern was raised that paragraph 1.1 refers to Rutland Schools, however, as the job titles the policy refers to do not exist in schools it is unusable. It was agreed that the wording relating to schools would be removed from the policy and Education Personnel Management (EPM) would be consulted on a new policy for schools. EPM would be reminded that Rutland schools are all small Primary schools.

Probation Policy

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- i. Concern was raised regarding wording in paragraph 3.1. This was to be amended to 'a minimum of once a month' for monthly probationary meetings to be held.
- ii. It was agreed to add to paragraph '3.2. 'Elected Members' to the communication point.

Job Evaluation Appeals

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- i. It was confirmed that the policy had been amended to reflect the change in the appeals process. Appeals no longer go to Elected Members. The Job Evaluation process can be applied to posts up to scale PO7, therefore, an appeals panel would be made available of Assistant Directors and above if necessary.

Pension Discretions

- i. No points were raised

Early Retirement Policy

- i. No points were raised

Flexible Working Policy

- i. No points were raised

RESOLVED

That subject to the agreed modifications and proposed wording that the following HR policies **APPROVED**:

- Absence Management Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Probation Policy
- Job Evaluation Appeals
- Pension Discretions
- Early Retirement Policy
- Flexible Working Policy

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.08 pm.

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