

Minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory and Support Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Monday 13th April 2015 at 4:30pm

P R E S E N T

Councillor Anna Bailey (Chairman)
Councillor Allen Alderson
Councillor Sue Austen
Councillor Derrick Beckett
Councillor Colin Fordham
Councillor James Palmer (as Substitute for Councillor Sue Willows)
Councillor Tony Parramint
Councillor Charles Roberts
Councillor Mike Rouse
Councillor Hazel Williams MBE
Councillor Pauline Wilson (as Substitute for Councillor Lorna Dupré)

OTHERS PRESENT

Councillor Jeremy Friend-Smith
Kathy Batey – Human Resources & Facilities Services Manager
Richard Quayle – Director, Support Services
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Jenny Winslet – Senior Environmental Health Officer

66. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

67. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lorna Dupré and Sue Willows and from the Director, Regulatory Services, Jo Brooks. Councillors James Palmer and Pauline Wilson substituted for Councillors Willows and Dupré respectively for this meeting.

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

69. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the no announcements.

70. **APPROVAL OF DRAFT FOOD AND HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT POLICIES FOR CONSULTATION**

The Committee received a report, reference P232 previously circulated, that considered updating the Council's Food and Health and Safety Enforcement Policies to satisfy the 2014 Regulators Code and conform to the Council's general Enforcement Policy.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer advised the Committee that the Policies were required by Regulation and needed updating. The draft Policy had been checked by the Council's Legal Department and was ready to be put out to consultation.

Councillor Derrick Beckett asked how many health inspectors the Council had and whether all food retailers would be notified about the revised Policy. The Senior Environmental Health Officer stated that there were 3.8 full-time health and food inspectors available. The district had 860 food businesses, so it would be very expensive to write to them all within the 12 weeks consultation period, as a lot did not have email.

Councillor Allen Alderson queried who the stakeholders to be consulted were. The Committee was informed that this would involve those on the regular list of consultees, including the Chamber of Commerce, the College and the Equal Opportunities Group. It would be very expensive to contact every company, particularly as this Council was not responsible for some.

Councillor Mike Rouse questioned whether this Council had any responsibility over outbreaks of Legionnaires Disease. The Senior Environmental Health Officer stated that the Council would get involved were there an outbreak, though it was not part of its remit.

It was resolved:

That the draft East Cambridgeshire District Council Food and Health and Safety Enforcement Policies at Appendix 1 be approved for the purposes of consultation with relevant stakeholders and the general public.

71. **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a report, reference P233 previously circulated, that considered a proposed Vision Statement for the Council's Transformation Programme.

The Director, Support Services, reminded the Committee of the budget seminar where the Management Team had presented proposals. In February another Members' seminar had explored this issue further. The thoughts and ideas generated by this seminar had been picked up by officers, who had looked to consolidate these into a programme. Seven statements, shown in paragraph 3.3 of the report, set out the Vision Statement. If Members were happy with this, then officers would set up officer focus groups over the next few weeks to

look at the various areas of the Vision, how to deliver them and their governance arrangements.

Another Members' seminar would be held on 22nd June to explore the proposals coming from the groups. A further report would then be brought back to this Committee on 6th July, with a full plan explaining how this Vision would be delivered.

Councillor Allen Alderson wanted an explanation of how locally elected Members would be helped in their role as community leaders. The Director, Support Services stated that Members could expect to be provided with access to Ward information on topics such as health and other public issues. This had not been specified at this stage, so further work was required to put the detail in.

Councillor Derrick Beckett asked if parish councillors would come under this, as the Council had moved away from Neighbourhood Panels and Shape Your Place. Parish Councils had problems accessing individual organisations, so this had to be considered. Councillor Hazel Williams concurred that parishes had a part to play but professional bodies had to be involved as well. The Committee was informed that working effectively with partners would be looked at including how wide this should be and who should be involved. Some officers were already working with parish councils and would try to tie them in to this process.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Vision Statement for the Council's Transformation Programme as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report be approved;
- (ii) That a further report be received on 6th July 2015, setting out the full programme, plan and governance arrangements for Members' approval.

72. **REVISED PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (APPRAISAL) SCHEME AND DRAFT PERFORMANCE RELATED INCREMENTS (PRI) POLICY**

The Committee received a report, reference P234 previously circulated, that considered the introduction of a revised Performance Management (Appraisal) Scheme, incorporating a new policy on Performance Related Increments (PRI) as detailed in Appendix 1.

The Human Resources & Facilities Services Manager advised the Committee that the first element was the revised appraisal scheme. This aimed to reduce the number of targets and to introduce performance indicators that were Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic and Time based with a focus on service priorities. The appraisals would also involve the appraiser's line manager, a revised form to identify staff strengths to deliver the service plan, a re-instatement of the mid-term reviews and a replacement of the current rating system with a new one. These proposals had been to Unison, which made no objections to them.

The second element related to a new policy concerning pay related increments. At the moment there was an automatic progression on increments but the proposal was to introduce a new scheme based on performance, gauged through the appraisal process, if approved by Council. It would present opportunities for staff to be rewarded for outstanding performance. Staff performance would be judged under five different ratings. For the scheme to be fair the manager and their line manager would set a rating, which would then go to a Panel set up to check fairness across the Council. The Human Resources service would confirm the rating and implement any pay changes.

These suggestions had gone out to consultation and the union, Unison, plus four individual responses had been received which did not support the proposals. A draft response to Unison's reply was tabled. Therefore, if Members decided to agree to the proposals there would not be a collective agreement. To gain a collective agreement it would require individual negotiations.

The proposed appraisal scheme had to go to full Council for approval, as it would affect the pay of the Chief Executive.

Councillor James Palmer asked, as this Council could not be the first to use such a scheme, where the information for the template had been derived from. The Human Resources & Facilities Services Manager stated that it had come from a variety of organisations and a number of local authorities had moved to this type of scheme.

Councillor Derrick Beckett wanted clarification about the current scheme where it appeared everyone got a yearly incremental pay increase plus any increase agreed via the national agreement, so did this proposal mean the yearly increment would be scrapped?. He also queried how staff could be judged when comparing performance. Councillor Anna Bailey confirmed the yearly increment would cease and any potential increase would be based on performance. Performance comparisons would be different in each service area. It would start with the Service Delivery Plans, which the staff were involved in drawing up, with background documents giving details on how to achieve the different ratings. The moderation Panel would not look at every appraisal but would assess whether the scheme was being applied fairly and consistently.

Councillor Mike Rouse noted that 70% of the staff were at their incremental barrier and could not go beyond it. What process was there for staff to progress to the next level and could the pay scales change? The Human Resources & Facilities Services Manager stated that this would only occur if there was a change in the job profile which would have to be evaluated, but no change would be made in the pay scales.

Councillor Hazel Williams thought the new appraisal system would be very good but would be harder to link to the pay increments. It would also slow down the awarding of these increments, which would only be applied if the performance was deemed excellent. This should apply to someone deemed to

have a rating of 'good', but this scheme suggested otherwise. Therefore the designation of 'good' should be change to 'satisfactory' if they are not to get an increment.

Councillor Derrick Beckett agreed with Councillor Williams and questioned whether there was a need for five different ratings and whether four be enough. If staff received an 'outstanding' rating would they receive a 1% increment as a one-off? This was confirmed by the Human Resources & Facilities Services Manager as a one-off lump sum.

Councillor Jeremy Friend-Smith, the Human Resources Service Delivery Champion, contended that the appraisal scheme had needed overhauling, so a thorough look at it had been done. The new ratings had been defined and 'good' should remain as 'good', although the definition seemed to indicate something 'fairly good'. When staff reached the top of their pay scale it could be expected that their performance would be excellent, so the aim was to improve further.

Councillor Charles Roberts noted the wide agreement for the scheme but proposed the rating 'good' be changed to read 'satisfactory'. This was duly seconded and, when put to the vote, agreed.

Concerns had been expressed by Unison, as some staff felt insecure and presently morale was not high. The Council had lost more, experienced, staff and were still losing staff, which the Council could not afford to do. There was some risk that the proposals would not achieve what was being aimed for.

Councillor Anna Bailey wanted to respond to Unison's concerns. Firstly, thanks were proffered to Unison and the individuals for their responses. Unison had recognised that the current scheme was not suitable, therefore it was not credible, whilst the new scheme sought consistency.

It was regrettable that Unison would not be involved in the Panel and it was strongly urged that they have a representation on it.

Thanks were given for highlighting the potential equality issues, though the inequality in gender pay was not found at this Council. It was assumed the Panel would monitor any inequalities issues. The idea that staff would have to work extra hours to improve their rating was clearly not the intention of the scheme and would not be expected. It was more about the attitude of staff during working hours. Everyone would have the chance to become 'outstanding'.

The cynical view that there would be breakdowns within department teams was rejected. It was hoped the scheme would raise standards. It was not agreed that this scheme would have a detrimental effect on recruitment, as recently employed staff had not been deterred by the suggested changes. The Council was committed to do a salary review to ensure that salaries remained competitive. The Commercial Services Committee could review the pay gap between the lowest and highest paid staff. Unison showed a lack of

understanding of Members pay, as they had lead by example. It was the job of the taxpayers to decide on the performance of Members through the ballot box.

Unison had suggested agreement with the basics of the proposed new scheme, however it had suggested another scheme outside the appraisal scheme but with no idea how this would work. Staff would be rewarded via the new scheme if their performance was excellent. A public survey had been conducted by the Conservative Group which showed that 65% of responders agreed with the new scheme, so there was a mandate to introduce it. Currently there was no means of rewarding staff who were at the top of their pay scales. This new scheme recognised that.

Councillor Mike Rouse, having read the staff comments, noted that they were not all about pay. He thought that staff did not need to be experienced to be excellent, so this should not affect young staff more than any other. Other things were involved with effecting staff morale and there was some responsibility on managers to consider this.

Councillor Hazel Williams thought the response about the 'living wage' was not specific enough and needed amending. The Chairman proposed making minor typographical errors to the Unison response letter and proposed that the words "it is envisaged" be removed from that letter. This was agreed.

The recommendations, subject to the agreed changes, were put to the Committee and were agreed unanimously.

It was resolved TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL:

- (i) That the revised Performance Management (Appraisal) Scheme, subject to one Assessment Rating being changed from 'Good' to 'Satisfactory', be adopted with immediate effect and the Performance Related Increments (PRI) Policy be adopted with effect from 1st April 2016.

It was further resolved:

- (ii) That the draft response to UNISON tabled at the meeting be endorsed subject to minor typographical errors being corrected by the Chairman of this Committee, the words "It is envisaged that" be deleted from the final page, all references to a rating of "Good" be changed to read "Satisfactory" and the decision of Full Council.

73. **LEADING LIGHTS AWARD SCHEME**

The Committee received a report, reference P235 previously circulated, that proposed the introduction of a 'Leading Lights' Award Scheme as detailed in Appendix 1.

The Human Resources & Facilities Services Manager advised the Committee that the Council was looking to introduce this new scheme, which would incorporate four categories of awards. All staff achieving an 'outstanding' in

their appraisals would be eligible for the Annual Outstanding Achievement Award, whilst staff could nominate other staff for the Annual Employee's Employee of the Year Award. Staff would receive a letter of recognition and be invited to a full Council meeting and the annual awards ceremony. Unison had been consulted about this new scheme and had raised no objections to it but had declined to be involved.

Councillor Anna Bailey explained that this new scheme would not replace the existing annual recognition of achievement scheme. The recent staff survey had indicated that the staff wanted recognition of their achievements. Unison had some reservations about the scheme, as it feared this might de-motivate staff, but these may have been too subjective.

Councillor Hazel Williams thought there was a danger that this scheme could be divisive and patronising and was cringe-worthy. If introduced, it had to ensure that it would be fair and equal across all Council departments.

Councillor Charles Roberts, though agreeing with Councillor Williams, still considered a recognition scheme was appropriate and that it should not be viewed negatively. It was meant to reward people for their exceptional efforts. This should not be a problem within the new Council culture.

Councillor Pauline Wilson did not agree with this scheme, as it was odd that it followed on from the new appraisals scheme and could be upsetting for those staff who worked just as hard but did not get this award. Staff scoring an outstanding in their appraisal would be getting a pay reward, so this would be extra. It could be supported if the scheme related to staff working beneath the managers' level.

Councillor Tony Parramint thought it would be good to give it to somebody to recognise them when doing an extremely good job.

Councillor Allen Alderson noted that the report set out the objective to acknowledge people who had gone the 'extra mile'. At the transformation seminar a discussion had been held on how to incentivise staff to relate better to the public and this scheme would help with that.

Councillor Derrick Beckett hoped that these achievements would be disseminated down the chain after being awarded, to encourage best practice. He noted that the £250 value was subject to tax, which devalued the prize. Therefore he proposed that the £250 be net of tax, with the Council absorbing the tax element. This was duly seconded and agreed.

The recommendations, with the agreed amendment, were duly proposed and seconded and when put to the vote declared carried.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the "Leading Lights" Award Scheme, subject to the prize value per award being £250 net of tax, be adopted with immediate effect

following the end of the consultation period with the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC);

- (ii) That the selection process for the Annual Outstanding Achievement Award be reviewed (if necessary) following Full Council in May, when the proposed introduction of the Performance Related Increments Panel will be determined.

74. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee received its forward agenda plan. The Chairman wanted a couple of additional items added to the agenda plan relating to a salary review and the pay gap issue.

It was resolved:

That the forward agenda plan, with the addition of two future items, be noted.

The meeting closed at 5:54pm.