

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON MONDAY 1
MARCH 2010 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D A A Peek (Chairman)
Councillors J Mayes, J O Ranger, S Rutland-
Barsby, N Wilson, M Wood and
C Woodward.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors A P Jackson.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Helen Farrell	- Human Resources Officer
Philip Hamberger	- Programme Director of Change
Martin Ibrahim	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Alan Madin	- Director of Internal Services
Tinu Olowe	- Interim Head of People and Organisational Services

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Applicant A (for Minute 591 – in part)

587 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Committee passed a resolution pursuant to Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public during consideration of the business referred to at Minute 591 below on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

RESOLVED ITEMS588 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 18 January 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

589 CHANGING THE WAY WE WORK PROGRAMME

The Programme Director of Change gave a presentation on the Changing the Way We Work (C3W) programme.

He reminded Members of the aims of the programme and detailed the various projects that had been completed or were being undertaken. He updated the Committee on the progress being made and gave an overview of the human resource successes to date.

Finally, he detailed the projects that remained outstanding to complete the programme.

In response to Members' questions, the Programme Director detailed the progress made in setting up home workers and the lessons that had been learnt to date. He assured Members that confidentiality and keeping sensitive data secure would be maintained.

He commented on the green travel options that were being explored in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council. The Interim Head of People and Organisational Services referred to her experience at HCC and advised that some success had been achieved in this area.

The Programme Director also commented on how home working would impact on the culture of teams and how they communicated with each other.

The Committee thanked the Programme Director for his update on the C3W programme.

RESOLVED – that the progress be noted.

590 REQUEST FOR FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT (1)

The Committee considered an application for flexible retirement from a senior officer – Applicant A. The Director of Internal Services detailed the application made in his report as now submitted.

The Director advised the Committee that in considering the report, it needed to have regard to all the factors set out in the report and in particular, its decision should be a business decision based on the best interests of the Council rather than the interests of the applicant. It should not base its decision on any desire to reward past service. The value for money of approving the application needed to be tested against the value for money of the alternatives. In judging value for money for the future it could have regard to past performance as a guide.

The Committee noted the Council's policy on flexible retirement and the criteria for the use of the pension scheme. The Director advised that the criteria of a reduction in hours of "greater than" 25% was met with the proposed reduction in hours being 25.23% rounded to 25% in the submission. If the Committee was minded to approve the application, it should first be assured on both the service and financial implications, the benefits of, and risks to, the retention of Applicant A compared to the benefits and risks and costs of other alternatives if the application was not approved.

The Director updated the Committee with reduced figures for the strain costs as recalculated by the Hertfordshire Pension Fund (the Fund had identified it had overstated a period of transferred in service that the applicant had had outside the Local Government Pension Scheme). He advised that, if approved, the payments required to the pension fund would now be £92,643 or £33,325 per year over three years. Set against the reduction in salary, employer's pension and national insurance costs, the application, if approved, would result in immediate savings of £7k per year. The financial

implications of approving the application were therefore affordable. Details of the financial implications were set out in the exempt report now submitted (see Minute 591 below).

The Committee considered the application in part after passing a resolution to exclude the press and public (see Minute 591 below).

In response to a Member's question, the Director confirmed that in this case determining the application for flexible retirement was within the remit of the Human Resources Committee.

Councillor M Wood expressed his reservations on the application and commented that he could not support it.

After being put to the meeting and a vote taken on a show of hands, the Committee approved the application as now detailed.

RESOLVED – that the application for flexible retirement from Applicant A, be approved, to take effect from 22 March 2010, on the basis that:

- the proposed arrangement would be in line with modern thinking on flexible working arrangements;
- the application represented an appropriate use of public funds;
- the application offered value for money;
- the applicant was uniquely placed to support the Council in the difficult times ahead and that the risks of rejecting the application were too great;
- seeking a suitable alternative person would be potentially disruptive and expensive;
- approval of the application would not fetter the Council's ability to review its senior management structure as necessary; and
- approval of the application would assist in the aim of maintaining staff continuity.

591 REQUEST FOR FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT (2)

The Committee considered an application for flexible retirement from a senior Officer – Applicant A (see Minute 590 above).

The Director of Internal Services provided detailed financial information in respect of the application and the proposed financial agreement which would impose a potential financial liability on the Applicant. In respect of the financial implications, the Director advised the Committee that although the application was affordable in budget terms, affordability was not the same issue as value for money. He further advised that the applicant was available to respond to any Member questions.

Applicant A was invited into the meeting and answered Members’ questions. After this, Applicant A was thanked by the Chairman and left the chamber.

The Committee considered the application.

RESOLVED – that the exempt information relating to the application for flexible retirement be received.

The meeting closed at 4.15 pm

Chairman
Date