

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL - 28 JUNE 2006

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEETING DATES FOR HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WARD(S) AFFECTED: None

'D' RECOMMENDATION: That (A) the terms of reference as now submitted, be approved; and

(B) the meeting dates for the Human Resources Committee, as now detailed, be approved.

1.0 Purpose/Summary of Report

1.1 To ensure that we have a process by which elected members can engage with and monitor our Human Resources (HR) activity on a regular basis, which enables them to feel reassured that our HR practices are sound and that we are doing the best we can to attract and retain the quality of staff we need to continue to provide excellent services to the local community.

1.2 To define and agree the Terms of Reference for the newly formed HR Committee.

1.3 To agree the meeting dates for the HR Committee for the full Council year.

2.0 Contribution to the Council's Corporate Objectives

2.1 It is well documented that by improving employment practices and implementing various valuing staff initiatives the level of service improves. Therefore, the establishment of an HR Committee has an indirect impact on all our Corporate Objectives.

3.0 Background

3.1 The main concerns were that the Council has some outdated and unclear procedures and processes. The establishment of this committee realigns HR as a key resource within the Council and enables members to be involved in the activities of the function on a regular basis.

4.0 Report

4.1 At the previous Council meeting it was requested that full terms of reference for this Committee were prepared and presented to this meeting. These are attached at Appendix 'A4' (pages 58 - 59).

4.2 Dates of meetings for the year have been provisionally set as:

- 31st August
- 19th October
- 14th December
- 25th January
- 22nd March

Members request that meetings be held in Hertford. The first meeting will commence at 5pm, but discussions will be held at this meeting to decide the start time for future meetings. It is also requested that dates of the Local Joint panel are re-organised to align with the HR Committee, to increase efficiency in the decision making process.

It should be noted that the Chairman of the Committee has identified an additional date to the four dates specified, due to the ambitious work programme identified for this Committee as part of the HR planning process.

5.0 Consultation

5.1 This report has been sent to Unison for information

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 In the current employment climate of skill shortages and increasing employment legislation it is important that organisations have robust HR processes and procedures. The HR Committee provides an additional platform for the Council to ensure that they are meeting their legal obligations in this area.
- 6.2 Members of the Committee will receive training in their legal responsibilities as an employer. This training will be further discussed at the first meeting of the Committee.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 None.

8.0 Human Resource Implications

- 8.1 As set out above.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 Failure to ensure that HR procedures and processes comply with latest Employment Law will leave the Authority open to challenge at Employment Tribunals which may be costly and damaging to our reputation. All employers are facing increasing risk and greater potential liabilities.
- 9.2 Currently for unfair dismissal awards may range from £8,400 to £68,400. Additionally, for refusal to comply with a reinstatement order, a further award of between £7,280 and £15,680 can be made. Awards against unlawful discrimination can be unlimited.

Background papers

Terms of Reference May 2006

Contact Member: Cllr. Duncan Peek, Chairman of HR Committee

Contact Officer: Tina Nash, Head of HR Ext 1635.

HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The HR committee's functions relate to all aspects of the Council's role as an employer.

This includes the monitoring and strategic overview of HR activity in the following areas:

- Recruitment and retention
- Terms and conditions and benefits offered to employees
- Valuing diversity, with particular reference to achieving a workforce that is representative of our community and achieving a higher level of the equality standard
- Employee relations issues, including disputes
- HR services, including definition of processes and implementation of timetables
- Learning and development, with particular reference to developing staff to ensure that we have the relevant skills to achieve our corporate priorities and also ensure necessary actions are taken to retain IIP status
- Absence management
- The means by which employee performance should be managed, using PDR's and competencies and/or other processes as available

The Committee will also assume responsibility for:

- The approval and implementation of new and revised HR policies as developed
- To consider current, future and potential initiatives and developments in HR thinking and best practice
- Overseeing the implementation and co-ordination of the member training programme
- Acting as the authority's steering group to advise it in relation to the discharge of its responsibilities for health and safety by:
 - providing a focus for the consideration of health and safety matters

- monitoring the steps taken within the Council to ensure the health and safety of its stakeholders
- advising the authority of the steps that may be required to comply with regulations and codes of practice

- Chief Officers dismissal, grading, grievance and redundancy and early retirement pay and appointments (in line with national conditions and local procedures).
- All other matters relating to the employment of staff within the Authority, which are in line with Council procedures and delegated authorities

Delegated Authority

The Committee has full-delegated authority to act within the remit of its functions. The only limits to this are:

- Decisions which would be contrary to the Constitution
- Decisions which would be contrary to current legislation