

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Portfolio Holder's meeting held on
Tuesday, 16 September 2008 at 4.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor MP Howell

Councillors: MB Loynes RB Martlew

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:
Susan Gardner Craig (Human Resources Manager)
Greg Harlock (Chief Executive Officer)
Joe Brown (Democratic Services Officer)

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors RT Summerfield and Ms JA Dipple

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Portfolio Holder approved the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 June 2008.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in any item on the agenda.

14. REVIEW OF THE WORKFORCE PLAN

The Portfolio Holder considered a joint report of the Human Resources Manager and Policy and Performance Manager. The report included a revision of the Workforce Plan for approval by the Policy Holder and for recommendation to Cabinet.

Discussion was concentrated on the Action Plan, appended to the Workforce plan, and more especially on a possible failure of succession planning, which the Chief Executive Officer identified as one of the top five risks faced by the authority. He reported that Cabinet recognising the necessity of putting in place robust arrangements to plan and manage future change, had recently taken a necessary first step by enhancing the senior management capacity by the proposed appointment of a second executive director. This third Chief Officer post would be designated as that fulfilling the S151 requirement.

The Chief Executive Officer recommended that further consideration of succession planning within the portfolio and by Cabinet be brought forward and that the Portfolio Holder might examine the possible benefits of; additional posts, traineeships, or other measures, and the budgetary implications of setting money aside for this.

The Staffing Portfolio Holder also took the view that succession planning should be given greater corporate priority.

The Staffing Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the revised Workforce Plan and

- i) recommended the Plan to Cabinet,
- ii) recommended that the Action Plan be built into service plans for implementation by the officers concerned, and

- iii) requested that a report be produced for consideration within his Portfolio and by Cabinet detailing specific, proposals for succession planning across services, such proposals to include cost implications.

15. FUEL REIMBURSEMENT FOR CONTRACT HIRE USERS

The Portfolio Holder considered a report that reviewed the fuel reimbursement rates and the mileage claim payment method for contract hire users for the period beginning on 1 April 2008.

21 members of staff were being paid the same flat rate of 12.2p per mile regardless of engine size or fuel type. Those members of staff were being paid each month via their salary a 1/12 of a sum reached by multiplying an agreed mileage by 12.2p. At the end of each financial year a calculation was required to ascertain whether the contract hire user was in surplus or deficit, and an appropriate financial adjustment made.

The Chief Executive Officer commented on the recent dramatic increases in fuel price but also questioned whether there was a continuing business case for retaining the Staff Car Scheme. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged that a review of the scheme was within his current work plan.

Various options were examined within the report which also advised that payments made over and above Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) advisory rates were taxable and liable for Class1 National Insurance Contributions. Should the authority adopt the recommendations, 1 of the 21 Contract Hire users would be minimally, adversely affected.

The Staffing Portfolio Holder **AGREED** that:

- i) mileage fuel rates move in line with the advisory fuel rates as recommended by HMRC and in future the rates are adjusted in line with HMRC rates,
- ii) the rates for 2008/2009 be increased to current HMRC rates retrospective to the 1 April 2008, and
- iii) standard monthly mileage payments are ceased, to be replaced by monthly payments in arrears, supported by claims based on actual business mileage, and that the Staff Car Scheme, Terms & Conditions, paragraph 5.7 be amended to reflect this change retrospective to the 1 April 2008, and
- iv) requested that a report on the authority's Staff Car Scheme and car lease- hire agreements be produced for consideration at the next meeting.

16. SCHOOLS WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME

The Portfolio Holder considered a report of the Human Resources Manager which provided information in respect of the authority's involvement with the Cambridgeshire Schools work experience programme, which is coordinated through the Cambridgeshire Connexions Service.

The authority had in the past offered a range of opportunities to year 10 students to gain experience of the world of work with the council. The feedback from schools, students, parents, and the Connexions service had been entirely positive and the experience was perceived to have broadened understanding of the work and processes of local government.

The Portfolio Holder congratulated officers and praised the work done, hoping that young

people of South Cambridgeshire would continue to avail themselves of the opportunity of work experience with the authority. Complimenting the booklet 'Work experience with the Council', he hoped it was available at all senior schools in the authority area including Swavesey Village College.

The Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the report and "Work Experience with the Council" booklet, and gave support to the Council's continued participation in the Cambridgeshire work experience programme and **RECOMMENDED** that:

- i) participating children be awarded a certificate to mark completion of their work experience,
- ii) children resident within South Cambridgeshire be given preference, should there ever be more applicants than places.

17. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Portfolio Holder sought not to amend the forward plan at this juncture.

The Meeting ended at 4:57 pm
