

PERSONNEL SUB COMMITTEE
6 JULY 1998

Present: Councillors Sargeant (Chairman), Councillors Bayle, Beadsley, Blatchford, Harrison, Grayson, Mrs Keene, Mills and Ward

Substitution: Councillor Bayle for Councillor Wheaton

Apology for Absence: Councillor Wheaton

1. Substitute Members

Councillor Bayle for Councillor Wheaton

2. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 12 March 1998 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Local Joint Committee

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Local Joint Committee held on 9 June 1998 be received and noted.

4. Personnel Policies and Procedures (Item 1)

The Director of Corporate Services gave an update on personnel policies and procedures post April 1998 which included a review timetable for the following issues:

- Early Retirement
- Code of Conduct
- Whistle Blowing
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Capability Procedure
- Redundancy Handling
- Review of Car Leasing Arrangements
- Appraisal
- Long Service Awards
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption
- Training and Staff Development
- Violence at Work
- Leave (annual, special, flexi)
- Personnel Records
- Management Information
- Relocation
- Recruitment (testing, advertising guidelines, temps etc.)

- Job Sharing
- Customer Care

RESOLVED that the policy review timetable for the above issues, as detailed before Members, be endorsed.

5. **Council Policy on the Exercise of Discretionary Provisions Regarding Pensions and Severance (Item 2)**

In a detailed report the Borough Personnel Officer submitted proposals to amend the Councils policy on severance issues, the use of severance discretions and the new discretions available under the 1997 Pension Regulations.

RESOLVED that the following policies be implemented from 12 July 1998:

(A) ILL HEALTH RETIREMENTS:

- (i) To make any ill-health retirement under dispute subject to a second independent medical opinion.

(B) SEVERANCE FOR THOSE UNDER 50 YEARS OF AGE:

- (i) to use actual weekly pay in the calculation of redundancy payments to employees aged under 50.

(C) SEVERANCE FOR THOSE OVER 50 YEARS OF AGE:

- (i) To use actual weekly pay and the 66 week calculator in the calculation of redundancy payments to employees aged over 50 where a pension is not paid.
- (ii) To use the statutory redundancy scheme of up to 30 weeks and an earnings limit of £220 per week in the calculation of redundancy payments to employees aged over 50 where a pension is paid.
- (iii) To grant a maximum of 5 added years to a pension only in exceptional circumstances.

(D) LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

- (i) To continue to apply the severance principles of the Berkshire Personnel Protocol where a severance is directly attributable to LGR.

(E) 1997 PENSION REGULATIONS

- (i) Not to reduce or waive employee contributions for those with 40 or more years' membership.
- (ii) Not to agree to Voluntary Early Retirement for those aged between 50 and 59 years and pay them with immediate benefits.

- (iii) To increase pensionable service at retirement for staff with less than 5 years service only in very exceptional circumstances
 - (iv) Not to add to an employee's pensionable service on recruitment.
 - (v) Not to institute a shared cost Additional Voluntary Contribution arrangement.
 - (vi) To deem that membership in respect of female scheme members between 1972 and 1988 qualifies for widower's benefits.
- (F) THE EARLY RETIREMENT/SEVERANCE POLICIES OF THE COUNCIL BE REVIEWED BY OCTOBER 1999.
- (G) ANY STAFFING PROPOSAL INVOLVING SEVERANCE TO BE SUBJECT TO SERVICE COMMITTEE APPROVAL.

6. **Disciplinary/Capability Procedure (Item 3)**

The Borough Personnel Officer submitted suggested revised Disciplinary and Capability Procedures for the new unitary Council and sought the Sub Committee's views. It was noted that the Procedures had been the subject of consultation with the trade unions.

With regard to the application of the Disciplinary Procedure to employees on short term contract of two years or less, the Borough Personnel Officer undertook to examine the feasibility of utilising steps one and two of the Procedure where applicable.

Stage 2 of the procedure would be clarified to detail how employees were to be notified of a hearing.

RESOLVED that the new Disciplinary and Capability Procedures, as presented by the Borough Personnel Manager, be adopted with effect from 1 September 1998.

7. **"Whistleblowing" Procedure and Employee Code of Conduct (Item 4)**

The Director of Corporate Services reported that at its meeting on 10 September 1997, the Audit Performance and Scrutiny Committee had considered a report on the Committee on Standards in Public Life into Local Government. They resolved that an Officer Working Group be formed to produce drafts of an Officer/Member Protocol, a "Whistleblowing" Procedure and a revised Code of Conduct for Employees.

Accordingly drafts of each of the above documents had been prepared and considered by a Strategy and Policy/Audit and Performance Review Joint Focus Group. The Focus Group had recommended that the "Whistleblowing" Procedure and Employee Code of Conduct proceed through the normal route (including formal employee consultation) and these were presented before the Sub Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the "Whistleblowing" procedure and Employee Code of Conduct, as reported, be adopted with effect from 1 September 1998; and
- (ii) the new Procedure and Code be publicised to all Members and staff.

8. Items for Information

The Committee received and noted the following two items for information only:

- Fairness at Work (Item 5)
- Local Government Employees' Pay Award (Item 6)

In considering the Fairness at Work item the Sub Committee noted that details of the Governments proposals for family friendly policies were awaited and would be reported upon when known.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and concluded at 8.15pm.

CHAIRMAN