

Personnel and Development Committee Minutes

Date: 21 November 2018

Time: 6.00 - 6.33 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Harris (in the Chair)

Councillors G C Hall, Mrs W J Mallen and Mrs J E Teesdale

13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs S Ahoh, Councillor M Appleyard and Councillor M Hanif.

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel and Development Committee held on 26 September 2018 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

16 REVIEW OF SMOKING POLICY AND FACILITIES ON QVR SITE - DRAFT SMOKE FREE POLICY

The Committee considered the draft smoke free policy for the Queen Victoria Road (QVR) site and an amendment to the flexitime scheme. It was noted that the policy would be implemented from 1 January 2019.

The presenting officer Paul Spencer, Shared Support Services Manager, informed the members that the draft smoke free policy was based on policies adopted by other local authorities and aligned with the Council's core working hours and arrangements. The policy provided clear and concise information for staff and enforcement would be for managers to address. Once the policy has been agreed a communications programme would be implemented and support programmes signposted to WDC employees or councillors who wished to give up smoking.

At the Joint Staff Committee previously held before this meeting, Staff Side expressed concern regarding the definition of breaks and a lengthy discussion had been undertaken on whether smoking breaks should be treated the same as incidental breaks; such as making tea/coffee or toilet breaks. It was suggested that the time taken for a smoking break would be longer as staff would need to go off

site to smoke. Also that the Council has a legal duty to discourage smoking and could not condone smoking as a stress relieving tool.

Discussions were also undertaken regarding the wording of the policy and it was suggested that the following bullet points be included under the section 5, Non-Compliance:

- If the smoker is a WDC Council employee, this will be passed to the relevant line manager. The line manager will be responsible for offering guidance and support as necessary to help the smoker conform with the policy.
- If the smoker is a WDC Councillor, this will be passed to the relevant group leader and the Chief Executive, who will be responsible thereafter for ensuring the policy is adhered to in future.
- If the smoker is an employee of a QVR tenant organisation, this will be passed to the relevant employer. The Council expects all tenants to adhere to this policy, and to enforce their staff as appropriate.
- If the smoker is a visitor/contractor, this will be passed to the service which is hosting the visitor/contractor. The Council expects all visitors/contractors to adhere to the new policy.

Members discussed the report and it was noted that from the consultation 60% of the respondents wanted the Council to be a smoke free zone and that the Council should be promoting a healthy environment.

Members agreed the addition of the four bullet points as above to the policy.

Members also considered the suggested following sentence that Staff Side had requested to be added to the policy:

- That there are no special allowances and no special restrictions for smokers.

However after discussion the Committee did not accept this addition.

Members also considered the suggestion that the wording of the first sentence in section 3 – Statement of Policy be amended to say 'As with any breaks from work which involve going off site, smoking breaks should ordinarily be taken outside of core working time and in accordance with the flexitime scheme'.

Members agreed to this amendment.

Members also considered that the time recording systems used in some departments would not allow for multiple entries and that this could create an operational difficulty in recording smoking breaks. It was suggested that the times could be recorded manually and then added together so that an adjustment could be made to the final timesheet.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously

RECOMMENDED: That

- i) The draft smoke free policy for the QVR site be approved for implementation from 1 January 2019, with the inclusion of the following bullet points after section 5, Non-Compliance –
 - If the smoker is a WDC Council employee, this will be passed to the relevant line manager. The line manager will be responsible for offering guidance and support as necessary to help the smoker conform with the policy.
 - If the smoker is a WDC Councillor, this will be passed to the relevant group leader and the Chief Executive, who will be responsible thereafter for ensuring the policy is adhered to in future.
 - If the smoker is an employee of a QVR tenant organisation, this will be passed to the relevant employer. The Council expects all tenants to adhere to this policy, and to enforce their staff as appropriate.
 - If the smoker is a visitor/contractor, this will be passed to the service which is hosting the visitor/contractor. The Council expects all visitors/contractors to adhere to the new policy.
- ii) The wording of the first sentence in section 3 – Statement of Policy be amended to say ‘As with any breaks from work which involve going off site, smoking breaks should ordinarily be taken outside of core working time and in accordance with the flexitime scheme’.
- iii) That the small amendment to the flexitime scheme for implementation from 1 January 2019 be approved.

17 FUTURE MEETINGS

Due to the recent announcement from the Secretary of State regarding a Single Unitary District Authority in Buckinghamshire it was suggested that meetings may need to be more frequent to consider and discuss any relevant issues.

The date of the next meeting would be communicated to the Committee.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Jemma Durkan - Senior Democratic Services Officer

John McMillan - Head of HR, ICT & Customer Services
Paul Spencer - Shared Support Manager
Jo Whiteley - Human Resources Manager (Operations)