

**At a meeting of the PERSONNEL COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on THURSDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2008 at 4.00 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor S. Watson in the Chair

Councillors Gofton, Howe, Paul Maddison, Old, Trueman, P. Watson and A. Wilson.

**Part I**

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allan, Fairs and J. Walton.

**Receipt of Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Report of the Meeting of the Personnel Committee**

The report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 11 November 2008, Part I (circulated) was submitted and consideration given to it.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

1. RESOLVED that the report of the meeting be noted, confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the addition of Councillor Howe's apologies.

**Consultation Paper : Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees**

The Corporate Head of Personnel, City Solicitor and City Treasurer submitted a joint report (circulated) updating the Committee on proposals for the implementation of a mandatory Model Code of Conduct for Local Government Employees.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Senior Assistant City Solicitor informed the Committee of the background to the development of proposals for a Code of Conduct for Employees. The draft Code is a two-tier model. The first tier of certain “core values” will apply to all employees and the second tier which draws on the Members’ Code will only apply to “qualifying employees”. The consultation document suggests that “qualifying employees” could be identified on the basis of either those holding politically restricted posts or on the basis that they carry out delegated functions.

The suggested response from the Authority indicates a preference for the “qualifying employees” to be identified based on politically restricted posts, however it was also considered that some principles that would apply only to qualifying employees according to the draft Code, should actually apply to all employees.

One of the main provisions for qualifying employees was to complete a register of interests, whether or not these interests gave rise to a conflict with the Council’s interests. It was felt that the provision in the current Sunderland Employee’s Code of Conduct was preferable as this required all employees to declare to their Chief Officers any interests which they considered could bring about a conflict with the Council’s interests. Councillor Gofton commented that she was concerned about the suggested level of employees who should register their interests and the Senior Assistant City Solicitor confirmed that under the existing Council Code, any employee, no matter what level, must declare any conflict of interest.

Councillor Gofton went on to suggest that some areas of the Council are different to others and employees in certain areas of work may have more of a need to record their interests than others. The Corporate Head of Personnel stated that nothing in the consultation went beyond what would already be expected of employees, but it would be beneficial to remind all employees of their responsibilities when the new Code was implemented.

Upon discussion, it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the draft response to the consultation be approved and forwarded to DCLG.

### **Workforce Health and Well-Being Project**

The Corporate Head of Personnel submitted a report (circulated) providing an outline of the Workforce Health and Well-Being Project and its intended outcomes.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Corporate Head of Personnel informed the Committee that the Workforce Health and Well-Being pilot project is a collaboration between Gateshead PCT, Sunderland Teaching PCT, Gateshead Council and Sunderland City Council. The programme aims to target specific population groups employed by Councils where evidence suggests that individuals are difficult to engage by traditional methods and are frequently poor users of GP and other health support services.

It was intended that employees would have a health screening exercise and if identified as being at risk would be referred to the appropriate support or health intervention pathway where necessary. The employee's GP would be informed of their screening and referral.

Councillor Howe enquired as to who else would share the information from the tests and the Corporate Head of Personnel advised that these would be bound by medical confidentiality requirements and therefore would only be made available to the individual concerned, the OHU and the individual's GP. In response to a further query from Councillor Howe, the Corporate Head of Personnel advised that the action would not be taken in respect of employees who chose not to engage with the process.

Councillor Gofton asked if there were any incentives for employees to take part in the programme. The Committee was advised that there were no incentives and it was hoped that through Dr. Abbass and the unions, employees would choose to participate and the intention would be that the project would go out to workplaces at different times of day. The Corporate Head of Personnel highlighted that currently Elected Members were not being actively engaged with health promotion and it was suggested that Dr. Abbas attend a future meeting of the Personnel Committee to discuss this issue.

Upon discussion, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the project and its intended outcomes be noted;
- (ii) an update report be received once the pilot project has been completed; and
- (iii) that Dr Abbass be invited to a future meeting of Personnel Committee.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation Order) 2006**

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

4. RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it is considered to involve a likely disclosure of exempt information relating to an individual or information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual or information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matters arising between the Authority and its employees (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraphs 1, 2 and 4).

(Signed) S. WATSON,  
Chairman.

**Note:-**

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.