

AT A MEETING of the EMPLOYMENT IN HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COMMITTEE held at The Castle, Winchester on 16 March 2011.

PRESENT:

Chairman:
Councillor T. K. Thornber, CBE

Councillors:

p	C. Carter	p	K. Evans
p	A. P. Collett	p	Felicity Hindson
p	B. D. Dash	p	K. House
a	Dr. R. J. Ellis	a	J.J. Wall

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Dr. Ellis and Wall who were otherwise engaged on County Council business.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a personal or prejudicial interest in any matter considered at the meeting declared that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, considered whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the code.

77. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

78. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

In regard to reducing the costs of corporate governance, the Chairman reported that a reduction in the overall number of committees was being investigated together with a reduction in size of others. Included in these proposals was the abolition of the Members' Allowances Panel which would see the Independent Remuneration Panel reporting direct to the Employment in Hampshire County Council Committee. This would consolidate the Committee's remit by having all staff employment and members' allowances matters within its terms of reference, which would streamline the structure and avoid duplication. This, together with other proposals would be discussed at the Council's AGM in May.

79. REMOVAL OF THE DEFAULT RETIREMENT AGE

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Human Resources (Item 6 in the Minute Book) informing the Committee on the Government's intention to abolish the default retirement age and the action required. The Director expanded on the report and in particular drew the Committee's attention to the proposed introduction of an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) and the implications for the County Council, such as increased employer contributions to the pension scheme as staff could be employed for longer periods. The Director also drew Members attention to a change by the Government on the proposals in that no new notices of retirement can be issued from 5 April 2011 rather than 6 April 2011 as had originally been proposed.

In considering the proposals, the Committee emphasised the importance of retaining as much workforce flexibility as possible given the challenges ahead. As an employer, the County Council is already embracing these proposals by retaining staff past the current default retirement age to retain skills, knowledge and expertise. However, some concern was expressed that junior members of staff may see these proposals as lessening their career progression prospects, therefore the situation would be monitored carefully to try to mitigate against a disproportionate turnover amongst younger employees. The Committee also sought clarification of what the position would be in regard to National Insurance contributions which would normally stop when 40 years service was reached. The County Treasurer would look into this matter and advise the Committee of the outcome after the meeting.

The Committee also highlighted the importance of maintaining the dynamic within the organisation to ensure continued performance at the highest level and to remain an attractive employer to the best people. Other initiatives such as the Apprenticeships Programme to help young people get off to a good start is underway.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted:

- (i) the pending legislation to end the default retirement age
- (ii) that in line with current practice, employees reaching 65 before 31 March 2011 may be given notice of retirement
- (iii) that subject to approval of the legislation, no new notices of retirement may be given after 5 April 2011
- (iv) that following approval of the legislation, arrangements would be put in place to communicate the change to managers and relevant employees

- (v) that it would be further informed on the guidance arising from the final legislation and of any further proposed actions arising from it.

80. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, being:

Paragraph 4: information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority; and

Paragraph 5: information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings;

which should not be disclosed for the reasons set out in the reports.

81. 2011 PAY REVIEW

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Director of Human Resources (Item 7 in the Minute Book) updating the Committee on the 2011 pay review and approved the recommendations contained within. (SUMMARY OF AN EXEMPT MINUTE)

82. UPDATE ON EQUAL PAY LITIGATION

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Human Resources and Head of Legal Services (Item 8 in the Minute Book) updating the Committee on the latest position in regard to equal pay litigation and approved the recommendations contained within. (SUMMARY OF AN EXEMPT MINUTE)