

3 APRIL 2009

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a special meeting of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Friday, 3 April 2009.

p Cllr L R Puttock (Chairman)  
p Cllr A E J Shotter (Vice-Chairman)

**Councillors:**

p G C Beck  
p W H Dow  
e J A G Hutchins  
p Mrs P Jackman  
e Mrs M McLean  
p J Penwarden  
A W Rice TD

**Councillors:**

p W S Rippon-Swaine  
e R F Scrivens  
p Mrs B Smith  
e M S Wade  
e S S Wade  
p Mrs P A Wyeth

**Officers Attending:**

Mrs M Sandhu and Ms M Stephens.

**44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

Cllr Mrs Wyeth in Minute No. 46.

**45. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

**46. REVIEW OF ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (REPORT A).**

Cllr Mrs Wyeth declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as a family member worked for the authority. She left the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Committee considered a review of the Council's organisational change policies with a proposed policy on early retirement on the grounds of redundancy.

The changes in the current organizational policies were suggested to allow the Council greater flexibility in responding to the changing global economic climate. The Committee heard from the Head of Human Resources that where changes were made, it was hoped that wherever possible, reductions in the number of employees be achieved through natural wastage caused by retirement or resignations.

In order to mitigate the impact of the recession, the Council had implemented a new vacancy management system. This meant that where vacancies arose, the recruiting manager had to complete a business case document, for approval by the Head of Service and Executive Management Team (Chief Executive and the two Executive Directors).

The Council would facilitate redeployment through the Council's 'At Risk' Register and would do all it reasonably could to provide job security. Members were keen that when examining overtime, employee workloads were considered, as well as financial implications. The Council considered overtime as part of its performance indicators.

The Committee were keen to ensure that staff approaching the age of 65 continued to have the ability to request working past the age of 65. The manager would need to go through and present a business case for the employee to continue working for the authority. The business case would take into account whether or not the Council was able to recruit someone under 65 with the right skills and abilities to perform the role. Only in exceptional circumstances would employment continue past age 65.

The Committee expressed the view that the cost of agency staff should be examined, and asked that officers bear in mind that where agency staff provided an essential front line service, their secured employment be considered alongside any resource issues.

Members paid particular regard to the morale of staff in this uncertain economic time, and expressed the view that continuous communication and consultation should take place with staff. The Council had already begun a consultation process with employees. At a corporate level, the Chief Executive was regularly communicating via emails to staff which clearly explained current circumstances and work being undertaken by Heads of Service and the Executive Management Team to manage resources and any staffing implications. Individual services were also examining their own resource issues and, where needed, Heads of Service were undertaking meetings with staff.

**RECOMMENDED:**

***That the Council agree that:-***

- (a) The organisational change policy as detailed in Report A to the Committee (effective from 1 May 2009) be approved;***
- (b) The proposed early retirement/redundancy policy (to be applied to all business cases signed and agreed from 1 July 2009) be approved; and***
- (c) The amendments to the existing delegations as set out in Appendix 1 to Report A to the Committee be approved.***

CHAIRMAN