

Lancashire County Council

Employment Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 6th July, 2020 at 1.30 pm.
Virtual Meeting held via Skype**

Present:

County Councillor Geoff Driver CBE (Chair)

County Councillors

A Ali	K Iddon
A Atkinson	T Martin
L Beavers	A Vincent
M Green (1)	

1. Apologies

(1) Replaced County Councillor David O'Toole for this meeting only.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 March 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held 9 February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. Urgent Business

Laura Sales, Director of Corporate Services and Deborah Barrow, Head of Service, Human Resources, provided a verbal update to share the decisions taken under delegated authority agreed by the Corporate Management Team since the commencement of the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown.

It was explained that the process was initiated to facilitate timely human resource decisions, necessary to support the fast changing needs of Lancashire's residents in the initial stages of the pandemic, when face to face meetings could not be held. Any decisions that were likely to be contentious or cost a significant sum of money were made by the Director of Corporate Services (Laura Sales), following consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Employment Committee, in accordance with the Committee's urgent business procedure and circulated to members of the Employment Committee. This was done on 9 April 2020 for 'Changes to Staff Terms and Conditions due to the present Coronavirus Emergency Circumstance'.

In response to changes to Government legislation, virtual meetings had been put in place and were working well. Therefore future decisions under the remit of Employment Committee would be conducted in the usual way.

The following decisions related to the Human Resources Service had been taken since the last meeting of Employment Committee under delegated authority and were in place until 31 August 2020:

- The overtime payments cap, in place for staff paid at grade 8/9, scale point 19 was removed to facilitate more flexible working for staff at all grades. Prior to this change staff at or above scale point 19 would be offered time off in lieu for additional hours worked. Individual business cases were agreed by Laura Sales and Deborah Barrow. As a result overtime payments had been made in Adult Services and a small number of staff in Facilities Management.
- The three year restriction on employing staff who had taken voluntary redundancy was waived to allow former staff to be approached to support critical roles. To date this had not been used.
- The flexible retirement policy was eased to allow staff to remain in post beyond the usual 12 months to enable necessary support to critical roles. To date this had been applied in a small number of cases.
- The flexi-time scheme was suspended as it was not compatible with home working. However managers could still be flexible with staff who had worked additional hours or for those who needed to work differently in order to home school.
- The scheme enabling the purchase of an additional five days leave without manager approval had been suspended, to prevent any impact on critical roles.
- The leave policy had been amended to ensure staff used their leave during the 2020/21 leave year. Staff were required to use 40% by 30 September 2020 and 60% by 31 December 2020. This was put in place to ensure staff took time to rest and to ensure that once restrictions were lifted, services could manage requests for leave and maintain effective operations.

It was noted that the service had engaged with the recognised trade unions, who had been supportive throughout.

The Chairman expressed thanks to the service for reacting quickly to support ongoing operational requirements.

In response to questions from members the following information was clarified:

- The amendments to the annual leave policy would be reviewed again in the event of a second peak of the pandemic. It was emphasised that the service would respond rapidly to changes in the situation.

Staff would not be penalised as a result of circumstances relating to guidelines issued by central Government.

- During the initial stages, staff had been moved away from non-essential services to front line work. As processes were now in place, the county council would in a better position to adapt to staffing issues presented by a second peak.
- Managers would be flexible in terms of requests for leave from staff who have had to reschedule pre-booked holidays. New holidays would be agreed dependent on business need. The policy change in annual leave aimed to balance supporting staff in taking the necessary rest and maintaining effective operations.

5. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the committee would be held virtually on Monday 7 September 2020 at 2pm.

6. Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: That the press and members of the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there would be a likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the appropriate paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972.

It was considered that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

7. Payment of Market Supplements to Members of the ICT Solutions Architect Team

(Not for Publication – Exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972. It was considered that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interests in disclosing the information).

The committee considered a report from Deborah Barrow, Head of Service for Human Resources, regarding the Payment of Market Supplements to Members of the ICT Solutions Architect Team.

It was confirmed that in order to remain competitive in the market for the required skills a longer term evaluation plan would be required.

Resolved: That having considered the officer advice and recommendations, as presented, the proposals with regard to market supplements to members of the ICT Solutions Architect Team be approved.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston