

Minutes of the meeting of the **GENERAL PURPOSES** Committee held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Thursday 28 June 2007 at 2.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor Mrs S S Chandler

Councillors: B W Bano
K W Sansum
C J Smith
P A Watkins

Also Present: Councillor I H Ward

Officers: Head of Finance and ICT
Human Resources Manager
Performance and Risk Manager
Senior Human Resources Officer
Democratic Support Officer

92 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

93 DRUGS AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The Human Resources Manager informed the Committee that the Drugs and Alcohol Policy replaced the existing informal arrangements in place at the authority. This move was in keeping with the guidance of organisations such as ACAS and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

A decision had been undertaken not to adopt a zero tolerance approach to the consumption of alcohol during working hours as the Council held some staff social events during the day. Furthermore, very few of the Council's officers were engaged in the sort of functions typical of zero tolerance policies.

Councillor B W Bano expressed concerns that the policy was too lenient and advocated the adoption of a zero tolerance approach such as found in the NHS, where alcohol consumption up to six hours before work commenced was banned.

- RESOLVED: (a) That the Drugs and Alcohol Policy as set out in the report be adopted.
- (b) That a reporting procedure be introduced to ensure that all cases were properly recorded.
- (c) That the Drugs and Alcohol Policy be reviewed in twelve months.

94 SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

The Human Resources Manager advised that the current Smoke-Free Workplace Policy had to be revised in order to comply with new legislation. The Council acknowledged that while it could control its own premises, there would be issues

around home visits undertaken by the housing and benefits teams. A decision was taken to adopt a flexible approach and empower staff to make the appropriate decisions as to the course of action to follow should a tenant not comply with the written notice issued prior to any home visit. However, at this point it was difficult to predict what the reaction of tenants would be to this request not to expose council officers to smoke when conducting home visits.

The consensus of opinion was that it was the duty of the Council to take appropriate action to protect its staff and that the public would need to understand this in relation to Smoke-Free Workplace Policy

- RESOLVED: (a) That the revised Smoke-Free Workplace Policy as set out in the report be adopted.
- (b) That the Smoke-Free Workplace Policy be reviewed in twelve months.
- (c) That the Leader of the Council be advised should there be any incidents of violence at work arising from the introduction of the revised policy.

95 THE HEALTH ACT 2006 – DELEGATION OF POWERS

The Committee was advised that the report set out the delegations necessary for the Head of Development and Public Protection and the Environmental Health Manager to enable the Council to discharge its functions in respect of smoke-free legislation.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to the Council that the Scheme of Delegation to Officers be amended to incorporate the changes set out in Appendix A of the report.

96 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2007/08

The Performance and Risk Manager presented the annual Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08 to the Committee. The Cabinet and the Scrutiny (Policy and Performance) Committee had previously considered the report.

RESOLVED: That the Council's annual Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08 be approved for publication.

The meeting ended at 2.45 pm.