

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

At a Meeting of the

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

**Held on Wednesday, 4 June 2008 at 10.00 am in
Norfolk Room, The Conference Suite, Elizabeth House, Dereham**

PRESENT

Mr G.P. Balaam	Mrs K. Millbank
Mr S.H. Chapman-Allen	Mr D.S. Myers
Mr R.W. Duffield (Chairman)	Mr A.C. Stasiak
Mr P.J. Duigan (Vice-Chairman)	Mrs L.S. Turner
Mrs S.R. Howard-Alpe	Mr D.R. Williams JP

Also Present

Mrs D.K.R. Irving

In Attendance

Julie Britton	- Senior Member Services Officer
Neil Fordham	- Payroll and Reward Manager
Natalie King	- Principal Human Resources Adviser
Anne O'Halleron	- Human Resources Consultant
Ian Vargeson	- Member Services Manager

37/08 MINUTES (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed Adrian Stasiak as a new Member of the Committee.

38/08 APOLOGIES (AGENDA ITEM 2)

An apology for absence was received from Mr I Sherwood.

**39/08 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION REGULATIONS 1997 & 2008:
DISCRETIONARY POLICY (AGENDA ITEM 5)**

Since 1997, the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) legislation has required every Employer to issue a written policy statement on how it would exercise the various discretions provided by the Scheme; to keep it under review, and to exercise it as necessary.

The new LGPS Regulations required an updated policy document to be published and notified to the Norfolk Pension Fund within three months of 1 April 2008 and no later than 30 June 2008.

Neil Fordham, the Payroll and Reward Manager, introduced the report. He explained that the LGPS had identified a number of areas of discretion on which each 'participating employer' within the Pension Scheme was required to have a published Policy.

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At the General Purposes Committee meeting on 23 April 2008, Members had approved one discretionary area of the new pension arrangements, the allocation of employees' contribution bandings, which had been introduced with effect from 1 April 2008.

Another principal area in which discretion should be exercised revolved around increasing pension members' benefits, allowing early payment of benefits and waiving reduction in benefits for early retirement. Any costs incurred fell upon the employer.

A copy of Breckland's current Discretionary Policy, adopted in September 1998, was attached to the report at Appendix B.

Each of the discretionary areas within the Policy Statement would have advantages and disadvantages for both employees and employers. These had been summarised in the report at Appendix C.

The Policy, shown at Appendix A of the report, was Breckland Council's response to the discretionary elements within the 2008 regulations.

RESOLVED that the Discretionary Policy (The Policy Statement) attached at Appendix A of the report be adopted.

Neil
Fordham

Members were informed that this report would be presented to the Local Joint Consultative Committee meeting on 19 June 2008.

40/08 ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND ILL HEALTH PROCEDURE (AGENDA ITEM 6)

Anne O'Halleron, the Council's Human Resources Consultant, presented the report which concerned the approval of amendments to the Sickness Absence procedure. A copy of the procedure had been attached to the report.

The proposed amendments to the Sickness Absence Procedure were highlighted at paragraph 3.2 of the report.

The most substantial change to the procedure was the new requirement for return to work interviews to be undertaken by managers after each absence, regardless of the length of the absence or the overall absence record. This requirement had been added to Section 5.1 of the procedure. Managers would be required to meet with the employee, carry out a return to work interview and complete a return to work interview form. A copy of the return to work form would then be provided to the employee and HR.

The Human Resources Consultant hoped that this new procedure would have an impact on certain behaviours of staff. Training for all managers would be carried out during the months of June and July.

In response to a question regarding how long the interviews would take, Members were informed that it would depend on the individual Manager.

A Member felt that these back to work interviews were an excellent idea as they would discourage any tendency towards persistent absenteeism should this occur.

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In response to a further question with regard to what would happen if a particular manager, who was due to undertake an interview, was absent him or herself, the Committee noted that the interviews could be conducted on the manager's return or could be delegated to someone else in a senior position.

A Member asked who would be responsible for investigating senior management's absenteeism and further enquired about long term sickness absences at the 'higher level'. The HR Consultant emphasised that everyone would be treated the same.

Members agreed that the sickness absence procedure should not be adopted until the policy stated that it applied to **all** employees of Breckland Council. It was further agreed that it should be mandatory that all senior managers and the Chief Executive be involved in the training sessions.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Sickness Absence Procedure be adopted, subject to the inclusion of:

- 1) the procedure applying to all employees of Breckland Council; and
- 2) all managers who have line management responsibilities being required to attend sickness absence management training.

Anne
O'Halleron

41/08 REVIEW OF LEASE CAR MILEAGE RATES (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The Payroll and Rewards Manager presented the report which concerned a review of the mileage rate payable for travel on official business under the Council Lease Car Scheme.

The General Purposes Committee, at its meeting on 23 April 2008, had agreed to continue the adoption of NJC car allowance rates. At that meeting, the Deputy Chief Executive had committed to review the mileage rate paid for Council Lease Car users.

The current mileage rate for Lease Car users was 12p per mile. It was recommended that the lease car mileage rate be increased to a flat rate of 14.2p per mile, effective from 1st July 2008.

The Committee was in favour of the increase in the light of the significant enhancement in fuel costs over the last twelve months.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the lease car mileage rate be increased to a flat rate of 14.2p per mile with effect from 1st July 2008 be approved; and
- 2) the rate be reviewed annually each April.

Neil
Fordham

Members were reminded that this report would be presented to the Local Joint Consultative Committee on 19 June 2008.

42/08 APPLICATION FOR A SEX SHOP LICENCE (AGENDA ITEM 8)

In the absence of the Licensing Officer, the Member Services Manager presented the report which was to consider a renewal application for Absolookley Limited for a Sex Establishment licence at 17 Brunel Way, Thetford.

The Member Services Manager provided the Committee with the background to the application.

Members were informed that no objections had been received regarding the application and accordingly none of the mandatory grounds for refusal, as set out in paragraph 3.1.6 of the report, were applicable.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the application by Absolookley Limited for the renewal of a Sex Establishment licence be granted; and
- 2) the licence under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 relating to sex establishments be reviewed annually.

43/08 NEXT MEETING (AGENDA ITEM 9)

It was noted that the next meeting would be held at 10.00am on Wednesday, 16 July 2008.

The meeting closed at 10.25 am

Action By

Nigel
Burrows,
Patrick
O'Brien

CHAIRMAN