

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EMPLOYMENT AND APPEALS COMMITTEE
HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM A - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS,
POWYS ON FRIDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2017**

PRESENT

County Councillor M Barnes (Chair)

County Councillors G Breeze, A Jenner, D R Jones, F H Jump, K M Roberts-Jones,
L Roberts, K S Silk and JM Williams

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors N Morrison, G Ratcliffe and A Williams.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported.

3. MINUTES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the last meeting held on 21st September 2017 as a correct record.

Matters Arising

The Corporate Health and Safety team had provided information requested at the last meeting on skeletal injuries and the Council's policy on flu vaccinations for staff working with vulnerable people.

4. MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEES

The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the Shortlisting Sub-Committee held on 25th October and the Appointments Sub-Committee held on 9th November 2017 as correct records. Subject to the inclusion of County Councillor Lucy Roberts' name amongst the list of members present, the Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the Shortlisting Sub-Committee held on 15th November as a correct record.

5. DBS CHECKS

The Professional Lead for Business Services advised that DBS had revised its guidelines so that not every Councillor was required to have a check unless they had specific roles relating to children, for example as a school governor, or social care. A Councillor who visited families in their homes or met them at their surgeries did not have to have a DBS check. The majority of Councillors did have DBS checks as school governors. The Professional Lead advised that the Council did not accept the portability of checks from other organisations.

The Acting Director of Resources advised that the Council provided DBS checks for 7 other Welsh Councils and had recently received an agreement in principle to provide the service for Wales and West Housing. Business Services was looking to maximise its offer to public bodies to bring income into the council and retain jobs in the county. The Committee was pleased to note that the DBS team had been finalists in two categories in the Welsh Government Opportunities GO Excellence in Procurement Awards; GO Procurement Team of the Year Award and GO Procurement Innovation / Initiative Award – Local Government, Welsh Government & Housing.

6. WORKFORCE DATA

Committee discussed the workforce data. Members questioned the vacancy rates and officers explained that the figures were skewed by vacant posts not being fully deleted from the Trent system. The Committee asked that a data cleansing exercise be carried out and the Acting Director of Resources agreed to raise this at the forthcoming meeting of the Management Team and Heads of Service.

Officers also agreed to email the Committee with details of current vacancies and activities being undertaken to encourage recruitment. Members would also be provided with a link to the video produced to promote the county as a place to live and develop a career. Members suggested that the video could be shown in reception and public areas of council and school buildings.

Members were concerned at the low training completion rates for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in some services. It was suggested that this could be incorporated in the existing safeguarding training provided for schools and the training for social workers.

The Committee asked for more information on turnover rates including previous years' figures for comparison and the reasons why figures for agency usage were unavailable.

7. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS DATA

Members were advised that, overall, the number of employee relations cases recorded by HR had fallen so far in 2017 continuing the trend from 2016. The number of disciplinary cases had dropped whilst the number of grievance and sickness cases had increased. There had been a steady increase in the caseload from schools and a significant increase in sickness absence cases accounting for half the caseload. Members asked that consideration be given to including a question on stress on the return to work forms for school based staff.

County Councillor Roberts-Jones left the meeting at 12.05 p.m.

The Committee received a breakdown of the sickness statistics. Members were advised that the Audit Committee had recently considered a report on sickness levels and it was agreed to circulate a copy of that report to the Employment and Appeals Committee. It was suggested that the Joint Chairs and Vice Chairs

Steering Group be asked to look at sickness rates in Adult Services and Children's Services.

It was further agreed to explore the costs/benefits of providing flu jabs to front line staff such as care workers working with the elderly.

8.	EXIT INTERVIEWS
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The Committee was advised that exit forms has been revised and simplified and would be automatically generated when a member of staff left the council or moved to another department within the council. Schools would be encouraged to use the form.

9.	STRESS STEERING GROUP
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Following comments raised by the Trade Unions at the last meeting of the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Committee, the Stress Steering Group was being reconvened. The terms of reference had been circulated and the membership included one place for a member of the Employment and Appeals Committee.

RESOLVED that the Chair of the Employment and Appeals Committee be appointed to the Stress Steering Group.

10.	EMPLOYMENT CASE LAW UPDATE
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The Committee received an employment law update.

County Councillor M Barnes (Chair)