

**Durham County Council**

**Human Resources Committee**

**At a Meeting of the Human Resources Committee** held at the County Hall, Durham on **Friday 17 March 2006** at **10.00 a.m.**

**Present:**

**Councillor D Coates** in the Chair

**Members of the Committee**

Councillors Barker, Bell, Douthwaite, Iveson, Meir, Nicholls, Priestley, Shuttleworth, Simmons and Williams.

**Other Members**

Councillors Gray, Hunter and Myers.

**A1 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2005 were confirmed by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**A2 Exclusion of the Public**

**Resolved:**

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public can be excluded from the meeting of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

**B3 Costing Sickness Absence – Report of the Head of Human Resources**

The Committee considered a report from the Head of Human Resources on Costing Sickness Absence (for copy see file of Minutes).

A discussion took place about the various models for costing sickness absence with the implications and difficulties of each being highlighted.

The Members commented on the need for section managers to monitor and manage sickness absence more effectively, which would give a clearer picture of the cost to the Authority. The Head of Human Resources confirmed that the training programme for managers was still being rolled out but there was now evidence to suggest that the training was proving successful.

**Resolved:**

That the Head of Human Resources would consider the simplest form to present the cost of sickness absence information and report back to the next meeting of the Committee.

**B4 Sickness Absence: Quarterly Performance Monitoring – Report of Head of Human Resources**

The Committee considered, noted and commented on a report from the Head of Human Resources on Sickness Absence: Quarterly Performance Monitoring (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Members were informed that a visit to the Nissan car factory by a group of officers to investigate how sickness absence is managed in the private sector had proved very useful. The possibility of a visit by a small group of Committee Members was also discussed.

Councillor Hunter expressed concern about recent incidents that she had observed of employees being ignored by managers or colleagues and that it appeared civility or common courtesy was not being displayed. She continued that behaviour of this kind could be detrimental to an employee's moral.

A discussion then ensued about how Councillors themselves could convey an approachable attitude to all County Council employees.

**B5 Ballot on Strike Action**

Ann Robinson informed the Members of the Committee that, following the ballot of its members by the Trade Unions, industrial action would definitely take place on Tuesday 28 March but that measures to be put in place and exemptions were yet to be determined.

Signed by Councillor.....  
Chairman of the meeting held on 9 June 2006