



**FULL MEETING
THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2008**

**STAFFING UPDATE
(Agenda Item5)**

1. Introduction

This report updates members about the Premature Retirement of Oliver Woodman, currently Head of Employment Services with South East Employers. This was agreed by the Management Committee on 5 December 2007.

2. Recommendation

That the Committee notes the current staffing position and changes that are taking place.

3. Employment Services

3.1 Business direction and staffing changes

As with all our councils, SEE is going through change in our business direction, and how we will deliver services to meet our councils' changing needs and resources.

Employment Services has been a central hub providing guidance and advice on employment matters – on employment law, good practice, regional and national trends and the activities of our national agencies. This was seen to be our “core business” and is delivered to our member authorities by telephone and e-mail.

However, our councils' need for having this service delivered this way is reducing. There is now a choice of excellent commercial providers of employment law updates by web sites and publications. HR managers within councils are professionally qualified and competent, and this is subsequently reducing the end of phone and e-mail enquiries we receive.

As we see it, the future for our Employment Services work is to act alongside our Councils' HR teams as a supporting Business Partner providing more specialist advice and guidance. We are moving more to providing consultancy support through workshops, specialist projects, commissions, training and assignments on site. This adds value to our councils, and contributes to the income generation we require.

We need to search out these opportunities proactively, and become the recognised first choice as their Business Partner in employment matters.

Simultaneously we are addressing the redirection of subscription income across our business activities. Whilst the major part of subscription goes into the core employment service, we are now focusing on other areas, moving into the Democratic Services function, scrutiny and the development of Elected Members. Our success in securing the Progress through Partnership contract is an example of a development in our business activity and future direction.

Influenced by the change in business direction and the new shape of our HR business activity, Oliver Woodman is now retiring and will leave us on 31 March 2008.

Shella Smith, our HR Business Partner, is also leaving SEE as she has secured the position of Head of HR with Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council. We look forward to continuing to work with Shella as one of our councils in the Hampshire, Isle of Wight group.

3.2 Financial implications

In a full year, the saving to South East Employers from Oliver's departure is £67,782 (including on costs). This is a very significant sum to free up and redirect. It can be available immediately from the start of 2008-09.

Against this, the cost of the Premature Retirement is £19,500 for 1 year + 187 days. This will be payable in 2007-08.

South East Employers will augment Oliver Woodman's service for pension purposes by one year and 187 days, and Oliver will retire on 31 March 2008 with 38.5 years pensionable service.

4. Other Staffing Changes

One of our part-time Business Support Officers, Karen Andrews, has commenced maternity leave and we are making alternative arrangements for her work to be covered meanwhile. Karen's main focus is the mini surveys and information gathering that is invaluable to our councils for benchmarking and data sharing.

Nicola Locke, Business Support Administrator has recently secured a new post with Hampshire Probation Service and will be leaving us on 28 March 2008. She has provided a very efficient service in supporting the Progress through Partnership (PtP) programme.

We will miss all those who are leaving us and wish them well in their future careers or activities. We are currently carrying out the recruitment processes to fill these vacancies.

5. Treasurer

Winchester City Council provides our financial support and currently Alexis Garlick acts as our Treasurer. Winchester have recently recruited Martin Rutherford as Principal Financial Accountant and he will take over duties as the Treasurer for South East Employers in July, when the final accounts for the 2007/08 financial year have been signed.

Martin Rutherford is a Chartered Accountant and has worked for six years with PricewaterhouseCoopers in their public services practices in Newcastle and Southampton. He has broad experience of the local government sector, having provided audit and advisory services to numerous district, county and unitary authorities. He has also worked with a number of large organisations in the private sector.

Jennifer McNeill
Regional Director
March 2008