

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Thursday, 23rd October, 2014 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor R Domleo (Chairman)

Councillors D Brown, J Jackson, F Keegan (Sub for Cllr H Murray), D Marren,
B Moran, B Murphy and D Newton

Officers

Peter Bates, Chief Operating Officer
Anita Bradley, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer
Brian Reed, Head of Governance and Democratic Services
Alex Thompson, Corporate Manager Strategy and Reporting
Bronwen MacArthur Williams, Corporate Health and Safety Manager
Sally Gold, Legal Services
Rosie Ottewell, Organisational Development Manager
Dinah Robertson, HR Business Partner
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor H Murray.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Jackson declared that she was a member of GMB.

9 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2014 be approved as a correct record.

11 STAFFING APPEALS SUB COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a report on the proposed appointment of a Staffing Appeals Sub Committee.

The revised Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee, approved by Council in May 2014, included the consideration of Appeals as follows:

“Appeals

For the Staffing Appeals Sub Committee to consider appeals from staff in the following circumstances:

- Appeals against dismissal
- Appeals against grievance
- Appeals against policy (but only the first appeal where the appeals are based on the same issues/circumstances)
- Group appeals covering more than one Department
- Appeals which have initially been heard by the Chief Executive e.g. appeals raised by members of the Senior Management Team
- Exceptionally where both sides agree referral to Members is appropriate.”

The Committee was formally requested to appoint the Staffing Appeals Sub Committee.

The report proposed that the Sub Committee would comprise three members, who would be selected from responses to an availability request from Democratic Services. The Chairman or (if not available) the Vice Chairman would determine the composition of the Sub Committee as required. In line with best practice, and in relevant circumstances in respect of particular appeals, it was proposed that provision should be made for an appropriate gender mix on the Sub Committee. This would be agreed with the Chairman of the Staffing Committee on a case by case basis.

It was recommended that the Terms of Reference for the Staffing Committee Sub Committee should be as follows:

“To hear and determine appeals in accordance with the Council’s approved personnel policies and procedures in respect of:

- Appeals against dismissal
- Appeals against grievance
- Appeals against policy (but only the first appeal where the appeals are based on the same issues/circumstances)
- Group appeals covering more than one Department
- Appeals which have initially been heard by the Chief Executive e.g. appeals raised by members of the Senior Management Team
- Exceptionally where both sides agree referral to Members is appropriate.”

RESOLVED:

That a Staffing Appeals Sub Committee be appointed and that the Terms of Reference and Composition of the Staffing Appeals Sub Committee, as detailed in the report, be agreed.

12 2015/16 PRE BUDGET REPORT

The Committee considered the 2015/16 Pre Budget Report. The budget would be set by Council in February 2015, once the consultation process had been completed.

The Pre-Budget Report gave details of how the Council currently intended to vary existing budgets to continue to maintain viable and sustainable services to local people. Significantly the report set out proposals to:

- Freeze Council Tax for a fifth consecutive year
- Enter in to no additional borrowing in 2015/16
- Maintain appropriate reserve levels that protect against risks
- React to changes in demand and existing budget proposals that can reduce net expenditure by £6.6m including:
 - Increasing spending in Adult Services
 - Forecasting income from growth in the tax base and increasing returns on investment
 - Reducing overall spending in all other service areas by targeted interventions.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the 2015/16 Pre Budget Report be noted.

13 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Committee received a report which provided a general update on health and safety matters,

Following questions at the last meeting of the Committee on whether details of Alternative Service Delivery Vehicles (ASDVs) should be included in the report to Staffing Committee, the Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer advised that it would be more appropriate for the Cheshire Residents First Board to receive this information from the ASDVs and for the Board to issue an annual report to the Staffing Committee on the overall position.

The Corporate Health and Safety Manager reported that 13 corporate health and safety training courses had been delivered during quarter 2, which had been attended by 120 staff members.

Following the RoSPA award, feedback had been received on areas for improvement and it had been suggested that evidence on completed safety tours and use of occupational health services be included in future submissions. These points would be addressed in the 2015 Corporate Health and Safety portfolio submission.

The Corporate Health and Safety Policy was being refreshed and was currently in draft format. The draft had been circulated for comments including to Staffing Committee members. It was requested that

comments be provided to the Corporate Health and Safety Manager by 14 November 2014 in order for these to be included into the draft version. A further draft version would be consulted upon before being presented to the Staffing Committee in January 2015.

The Fire Prevention Policy had been updated with minor amendments to reflect the moving of more responsibilities from Asset Management to the managers responsible for running buildings – such as schools and centres. It was anticipated that the Policy would need to be reviewed again next year in order to reflect the outcome of further proposed changes. The Staffing Committee was asked to approve the updated Fire Prevention Policy.

The Quarter 2 corporate accident and incident statistics showed a total of 625 accidents in corporate core services, with 5 RIDDOR reportable accidents. Details of the monthly statistics for Quarter 2 were appended to the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted.
- (2) comments on the draft Corporate Health and Safety Policy be provided to the Corporate Health and Safety Manager by 14 November 2014.
- (3) the updated Fire Prevention Policy, as appended to the report, be approved.

14 HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Organisational Development Manager presented a report which provided a general update on human resources issues.

It was reported that work was underway on the actions to build the findings of the staff survey undertaken earlier this year. The work programme was attached to the report. The work programme included a range of manager and corporate actions to ensure that all employees understood, lived and consistently experienced the Council values.

The Making a Difference Employee Recognition Scheme had got off to a good start. During the first two months there had been a positive response to the nominations for employee and team of the month. In addition more than 50 “make my day” instant recognition acknowledgements were being sent each month. Preparations were underway for the celebratory event in December where employee, team and manager of the year would be announced, alongside a special Members’ choice award.

A ‘Coaching for Innovation, Change and Performance’ development programme had recently been piloted involving a mix of managers from

senior manager through to team leaders. Feedback from the pilot had been very encouraging and early indications were showing that taking a coaching approach was having a positive impact in terms of increased ownership, making breakthroughs on issues and releasing potential.

The Leave and Time Off Policy was being amended to also assist employees who were Foster Carers to paid time off work (up to 5 day). This policy amendment supported the Council's pro-active approach to Foster Caring across the Borough. The amendments were under discussion with the Trade Unions.

A working group had been established to carry out an end to end review of the Council's disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work policies and procedures to ensure that these were fit for purpose and suitable for ongoing and changing needs of the Council. The review had recommended changes to the Disciplinary Procedure to enable management to appoint external specialist investigator as necessary but in particular in relation to alleged sexual abuse or assault. It was also recommended that the Dignity at Work procedure be merged with the grievance procedure to enable flexibility and avoid duplication in process. These changes were being consulted on with the Corporate Leadership Board and Trade Unions prior to implementation.

The cumulative average days lost due to sickness in the second quarter 2014/15 were slightly higher than the previous financial year and a more detailed report on sickness absence would be brought to the next meeting of the Staffing Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.25 pm

Councillor R M Domleo (Chairman)