

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Thursday, 14th January, 2016 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor B Moran (Chairman)
Councillor G Barton (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors D Brown, JP Findlow (Substitute for Cllr M Jones), J Jackson,
D Marren, D Newton and A Stott

Officers

Mike Suarez, Chief Executive
Bill Norman, Director of Legal Services
Sara Barker, Head of Strategic HR
Sally Gold, Barrister
Rosie Ottewill, Organisational Development Manager
Karen Begley, HR Business Partner
Craig Hughes, HR Business Partner, Education HR
Graham Coope, Senior Corporate Health and Safety Adviser
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M Jones.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

27 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present.

28 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 15 October 2015 and 30 November 2015 be confirmed as a correct record.

29 HEALTH AND SAFETY, HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Committee considered a report on the progress with Health and Safety matters.

The report provided details of the number of health and safety courses undertaken, the inspections carried out and the accident and incident figures reported on PRIME in quarter 3.

The Committee considered a report on the progress with Human Resource and Organisational Development matters.

The report provided details on progress with the Council's Workforce Strategy, Organisational Design, Leadership and Management training, the Corporate Training programme, staff recruitment and retention, reward and recognition, the Council's sickness absence rate, and provision of Education HR Consultancy.

Plans were being developed to run a staff survey in June 2016. The Committee asked to see the survey questions prior to them being finalised and also requested that the results, with a question by question comparison, be shared with them. It was noted that the ADSVs would also be carrying out staff surveys and it was agreed that result be compared with that of the Council's survey.

It was noted that training sessions had been held on Child Sexual Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation. The Committee asked for the details of attendance at these training sessions, including how many had not yet attended the training.

Following the ruling in the Bear Scotland case, HR policies were being reviewed in relation to pay during holiday and sick leave. The Committee requested that a report be brought outlining the holiday pay proposals, the cost implications of possible claims and risk to Council, and that management consider communications of the decision to staff..

Details of the April to September 2015 recorded absence information and actions being taken to manage attendance were detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report. It was agreed that a small group of Staffing Committee members be established to explore how absence management could be improved.

It was noted that in Quarter 3, 124 employees had left the Council and that not all of those who had left completed exit interviews. The Committee asked if the exit interview process could be reinvigorated.

Arising from the information and data presented in the report a number of actions were agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the report be noted.

- 2 Details be provided of the five Academies who had not brought back Health and Safety services, and if known, the reasons for not doing so.
- 3 Clarification be provided on how the ASDVs are charged for support provided by the Health and Safety Team.
- 4 The staff survey questions be shared with the Staffing Committee prior to final agreement. The results, with a question by question comparison, be shared with the Committee and the survey results be compared with the ADSVs results, if available.
- 5 Details be provided of how many staff and Elected Members have attended Child Sexual Abuses and Child Sexual Exploitation training.
- 6 Details be provided on the Cygnet Pathway pilot and how its success will be measured.
- 7 As a result of the Bear Scotland case, a report to be brought to the next Committee outlining the holiday pay proposals.
- 8 In relation to Voluntary Redundancies, future reports to include a breakdown of the total severance cost by function and service and the Staffing Committee be provided with assurances that mechanisms are in place to ensure that the savings are realised. Comparator information on voluntary redundancy terms in Councils in the North West also to be provided.
- 9 To establish a small working group, comprising of Councillors B Moran, J Jackson, D Marren and JP Findlow, to explore further how absence management can be improved.
- 10 To consider the inclusion in future reports of other absence measures, such as the number/ percentage of staff who have no sickness.
- 11 The Staffing Committee be provided with the link to the wellbeing/stress guidance on the Centranet site.
- 12 In relation to Education HR Consultancy, future reports to include further information including the total number of schools, the breakdown of take up by primary, secondary and academies.
- 13 A corrected version of the quarter 3 2015-16 HR Performance Data table be provided to the Staffing Committee and the reason for the Headcount/FTE table commencing at August 2014 be provided.
- 14 Consideration be given to reinvigorating the exit interview progress.

- 15 Details of the confidentiality clause in Settlement Agreement be provided to the Staffing Committee.

30 HR POLICIES

(a) Terms of Voluntary Redundancy & Voluntary Early Retirement

The Committee considered a report on the terms of Voluntary Redundancy and Voluntary Early Retirement.

The report recommended that the Council retained the current voluntary redundancy terms for the financial year 2016/17 and that the next review should take place in October 2016, looking ahead to 2017/18.

As the Government had announced potential legislation to introduce a cap on exit payments and the Public Sector Exit Payment Regulations were potentially coming into effect in April, it was proposed that the decision be deferred and a report be brought back to the 21 April Staffing Committee meeting to include the effects of the legislation on the Policy, comparison information on other local authority voluntary redundancy schemes and a timeframe for a review of the voluntary redundancy terms.

RESOLVED:

That the decision be deferred and a further report be brought to the 21 April 2016 meeting.

(b) Pay Policy Statement

The Committee considered a report on the Draft Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17.

The Council was required under section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 to produce a Pay Policy Statement by 31 March on an annual basis.

It was noted that the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 had superseded the 2014 code. Officers were requested to check if this had any impact on the Pay Policy Statement details.

Arising from the information and data presented in the report, the following actions were agreed, with reports back to the Staffing Committee:

- an overview of the Hay system and details of the Hay points and positioning for senior managers/chief officers be provided to the Staffing Committee
- the definition of Chief Officers to be consistent throughout all documents
- senior officers be asked if they would be willing to provide their names as part of the transparency data information
- identify the groups of staff who qualify for the reimbursement of professional fees

- consider whether reasons exist to harmonise terms and conditions of staff who have transferred into the Council
- details on the employment of employees under contract for service who form limited companies

The Committee recommended the following amendments to the Draft Pay Policy Statement:

- Section 4 – Commitment to the Living Wage: first line add '2015' after 1 November.
- Section 5 – Recruitment of Chief Officers: third paragraph sixth line delete 'secure the best candidate' and insert 'attract and retain the talent it needs'
- Section 5 – Recruitment of Chief Officers: fifth paragraph fourth line insert an 's' onto the end of 'contract'
- Annex 1 – add a link to the Open Data and Transparency webpage

RESOLVED:

- 1 That the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17, with the amendments set out above, be recommended to Council for approval.
- 2 That the information requested, as detailed in the agreed actions above, be provided to the Staffing Committee.

(c) Code of Conduct for Employees

The Committee considered a report on proposed amendments to the Code of Conduct for Employees.

Following a recent Internal Audit inspection, amendments had been proposed to the Code of Conduct for Employees to strength the requirement to declare any interests. The Internal Audit report recommended that:

1. That each employee should be asked to complete a Declaration of Interests each year;
2. That the process for compiling and maintaining these annual returns should be centralised, so that a full picture of the interests of all employees was easily available to Council Members and Officers.

RESOLVED:

That the Constitution Committee be recommended to approve the following changes to the Code of Conduct for Employees:

- All employees are required to complete an annual declaration of interest return, to confirm that they have nothing to declare, and to then report issues as and when they occur;

- In Adult's and Children's Social Care no gift should be accepted under any circumstances.

(d) Implementing the Recent Constitutional Changes for Staffing Committee

RESOLVED

That this matter be deferred in view of time constraints and considered at a special meeting of the Committee on a date to be determined.

31 ESTABLISHMENT OF A STAFFING SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

That this matter be deferred in view of time constraints and considered at a special meeting of the Committee on a date to be determined.

Post Meeting Note: A special meeting of the Staffing Committee has been arranged for 10.00 am on Monday 29 February 2016.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.50 pm

Councillor B Moran (Chairman)