

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Thursday, 21st April, 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, J Jackson, M Jones, D Marren, D Newton and A Stott

Councillor in Attendance

Councillor JP Findlow

Officers

Sara Barker, Head of Strategic HR
Rosie Ottewill, Organisational Development Manager
Karen Begley, HR Business Partner
Sally Gold, Legal Services
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services

38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Jackson declared she was a member of GMB.

40 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

No members of the public were present.

41 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

42 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 4.

It was noted that the Health and Safety Team had been awarded their fourth consecutive RoSPA Gold Achievement Award and had also received a Commended Award in the RoSPA Public Service and Local Government competitive Sector.

The Committee was concerned about an incident at the Registration Service in Macclesfield and asked for further information including if the incident had been reported to RIDDOR, had support been provided to the member of staff and whether the incident had been reported to the police.

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.

It was reported that in relation to Workforce Priority reporting, a review of the format and data included would take place and in future would report against service objectives.

A collaborative procurement between Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Warrington Councils for Occupational Health services was under way, with tender submissions being required by 19 April 2016. The tenders would then be evaluated and it was anticipated that a decision would be made by the end of May with the new contract to start on 1 September 2016. The Committee requested details of the performance standards required of the future supplier of the service.

It was reported that the first 'Aspiring Managers' programme had been completed with a 100% pass rate. Further cohorts had been requested and would take place during 2016/2017. The outline programme for these sessions would be shared with Staffing Committee members.

The Committee asked about the impact of the Government's announcement to change all schools into academies and the effect this could have on the Education HR Consultancy Service. It was agreed that an update would be brought to the next meeting.

Details of the HR performance data were included in the report. In relation to the FTE by headcount, the Committee stated that they found the year on year comparison data difficult to understand due to the restructuring and changes in department names and asked if an explanatory note could be added to aid understanding. It was also requested that an estimated net position be provided and include the number of staff transferring to ASDVs.

The Committee asked if additional information could be reported which showed the expected salary and pension contributions saving over time using the wage bill of employed staff and agency workers. It was agreed that Officers would explore if this was possible.

The number of cases being investigated under formal procedures was noted. The Committee felt it would be useful if they could observe an Employment Tribunal to help their understanding and learning in relation to the Appeal hearings. It was agreed that the Head of Strategic HR would notify the Chairman of the Staffing Committee of the dates of any Employment Tribunals and that consideration be given to awareness training to support Members should they be required to attend as witnesses.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the report be noted;
- 2 further information be provided to Staffing Committee members on the incident at Macclesfield Registration Service;
- 3 details of the performance standards in the Occupations Health tender document be provided to Staffing Committee members;
- 4 details of the Aspiring Managers programme be shared with Staffing Committee members;
- 5 an update be brought to the next meeting on the impact of all schools becoming academies;
- 6 the HR performance data format be amended to include an explanation note on restructuring in the FTE year on year comparison figures and to include an estimated net position;
- 7 the Head of Strategic HR to inform the Chairman of Staffing Committee on the dates of Employment Tribunals and awareness training be provided on being a witness at the Tribunals.

43 HR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(a) Revisions to Human Resources Policies and Procedures: Pension Discretions Policy (post 1st April 2014), Retirement Policy, Redundancy and Efficiency Policy and Redundancy and Efficiency Procedure

The Committee considered a report on proposed minor changes to the current Pensions Discretion Policy and the associated Retirement Policy, Redundancy and Efficiency Policy and Redundancy and Efficiency Procedure.

A summary of the proposed changes was set out in Paragraph 10.1 of the report.

The Committee proposed that the decision on the pension discretions be deferred to allow a more detailed review of the pension discretion policy to take place which would take into account the Local Government Pension Scheme provisions and any discretions set by the Cheshire Pension Scheme. It was agreed that Councillors B Moran, JP Findlow and D Marren would meet with Officers to consider a review of the regulations, including regulation 16 – buy back of lost pension, and regulation 31 – purchase of additional pension, and to review the VR Panel and Staffing Officers Panel to ensure that appropriate control mechanisms are in place.

RESOLVED:

That the decision in relation to pension discretions be deferred to allow for a more detailed review of the Pension Discretion Policy.

(b) Exit Payment Overview

The Committee considered a report which detailed the current position in relation to the Government proposals on the recovery of public sector exit payments, redundancy capping limits and additional consultation on wider reforms to public sector exit payments.

The report also provided a summary of packages currently offered by other North West Councils and made proposals regarding a further review of the Council's voluntary redundancy terms.

The Committee was of the view that the review of the voluntary redundancy terms should not wait until the had Government clarified the proposals on exit payments and that it should take place alongside. It was proposed that Councillors B Moran, JP Findlow and D Marren met with Officer to progress the review and a further report be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

That a review of Voluntary Redundancy Terms take place, with Councillors B Moran, JP Findlow and D Marren meeting with Officer to progress the review.

(c) Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Procedure

The Committee considered a report which detailed the revised Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Procedure.

The Staffing Committee, at its meeting on 29 February 2016, had suggested a number of changes to the Procedure. The Trade Unions had

been consulted on these and had agreed to them. The Procedure was now presented to the Committee for approval.

A further amendment was reported in relation to paragraph 61 – ‘Violence at Work Policy’ to be deleted and ‘Corporate Health and Safety Policy’ be inserted.

The Committee suggested that consideration should be given to allowing a friend to act as a companion as well as a trade union official or work colleague to the appellant. It was agreed that this would be discussed with the Trade Unions and the outcome reported back to the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the revised Grievance, Bullying and Harassment Procedure, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved with the amendment to paragraph 61 of ‘Violence at Work Policy’ to be deleted and ‘Corporate Health and Safety Policy’ be inserted.
- 2 The Trade Unions be consulted on the inclusion of a friend as a companion to the appellant.

44 SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS

The Committee discussed the use and wording of Settlement Agreements when employees left the Council. The wording in the Settlement Agreements was based on a model template.

It was agreed that a review of the Council’s use of settlement agreements should be carried out and look at how frequently they were used and in what circumstances.

RESOLVED:

That a review of the Council’s use of Settlement Agreements be carried out and an update be brought to the next meeting of the Staffing Committee.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.40 pm

Councillor B Moran (Chairman)