

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Thursday, 24th January, 2019 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

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

Councillors M Deakin, D Flude, L Jeuda, M Parsons and JP Findlow
(substitute for Cllr R Bailey).

Councillors in attendance

Councillor S Corcoran

Officers in attendance

Kath O'Dwyer, Acting Chief Executive
Dan Dickinson, Acting Director of Legal Services
Sara Barker, Head of Strategic HR
Sarah Allcock, Senior Manager Work Force Development
Emma Morris, Interim Organisational Development Manager
Sara Duncalf, Acting HR Business Partner
Craig Hughes, HR Business Partner
Naomi Clarkson, Employment Lawyer
Julie Zientek, Democratic Services Officer

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors G Baggott and R Bailey.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors D Flude and L Jeuda declared that they were retired members of UNISON.

18 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

Councillor S Corcoran asked if any staff who had raised concerns about bullying had left the Council under the MARS scheme. He also asked what actions were being taken to ensure that no more employees were being bullied and forced out of the organisation.

The Chairman responded that it was not appropriate to comment on individual staffing matters. In terms of work done to address the culture and organisational changes, this included the commissioned LGA Culture Review Report, which had resulted in the Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme. There had been good progress made by Members

and Officers to address the issues. These included the appointment of Champions, Starting the Conversation sessions, Vision and Behaviours for Officers and Members, Member Induction Programme, Skills Audit, a series of employee surveys, a review of appraisal process, a review of the recruitment process, review and update of HR policies and procedures and a setting up of a confidential Bullying Helpline for staff.

19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

20 HR AND HEALTH AND SAFETY - Q3 UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report on the progress with the Council's People Plan 2018/20.

The report provided details on the progress on the areas of work identified for the three objectives linked to the Brighter Future Together Whole Organisation Transformation Programme.

The report also provided details on HR Performance Data for Quarter 3, which included headcount and employee turnover, voluntary redundancy and working days lost to sickness absence, and also a health and safety summary of accidents and incidents.

The Committee asked questions about the Exit Interview process and were informed that it was currently a paper based process with no centralised records maintained. In future, it was anticipated that there would be an automated process within the Business World system. It was requested that details of the number of employees who completed Exit Interviews in last 12 months be reported to the Staffing Committee at its next meeting on 25 April 2019.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the report be noted; and
- 2 the number of employees who completed Exit Interviews in the last 12 months be reported to the next meeting of the Staffing Committee, based on information/data already held within HR Services only.

21 BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER (CULTURE) PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme.

It was reported that programme delivery against plan was on schedule with the exception of Induction Programme and Appraisal which had experience slippage due to delays associated with implementing the Business World system.

In October the Council had asked staff to complete a short “pulse” survey to test the awareness of the Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme and a total of 1,3331 staff had completed the survey. An Action Plan had been developed to respond to the results of the survey.

The Committee asked questions about the Bullying Helpline and it was agreed that usage data to the end of December 2018 would be circulated, when available, to Staffing Committee members.

Questions were also asked about reasons for absence across the Council and the support mechanisms in place. It was agreed that the information for 2018/19 should be reported to next the Staffing Committee meeting.

Councillor B Moran reported on the Committee’s Brighter Future Together (Culture) Programme assurance role and that members and officers had met again on 7 January 2019 to review progress. It had been concluded that the Programme was working well and that the Staffing Committee assurance role had been successfully completed.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the report be noted;
- 2 the number of users of the Bullying Helpline be circulated when available; and
- 3 details of key reasons for absence and support mechanisms in place for the period April 2018 to March 2019 be reported to the next Staffing Committee meeting.

22 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2019/20

The Committee considered a report on the Draft Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20.

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.

Changes since last year’s Statement were outlined in Section 6.4 of the report and included a change in the remuneration ranges for Chief Officers, the development of the new Cheshire East Pay Structure and the NJC pay agreement which meant that the lowest paid staff now exceeded the National Living Wage.

RESOLVED: That

- 1 the changes since the 2018/19 Pay Policy Statement be noted, as outlined in Section 6.4 of the report; and
- 2 Council be recommended to approve and publish the Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20.

23 MUTUALLY AGREED RESIGNATION SCHEME (MARS) - REVIEW OF PROGRAMME FOR JUNE 2018 LEAVERS

The Committee considered a report on the outcomes and lessons learnt from the Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme.

The Mutually Agreed Resignation Scheme had opened for applicants in March 2018 and received 96 applications. Of these 32 were approved and 28 employees accepted the offer to leave the Council on 30 June 2018.

The report detailed a number of learning points for future schemes which included clarification of financial terms, projected savings, tax implications, changes to the settlement agreement template and also changes to timeline and process. The resultant Action Plan was also considered.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

24 EMPLOYMENT TRIBUNALS - OVERVIEW OF LESSONS LEARNT

The Committee considered a report on the lessons learnt from six employment tribunal claims against the Council in the last 12 months.

It was reported that figure for the total legal costs in paragraph 4.3 of the report was incomplete at the time of preparing the report and should be £75,400 (plus VAT). There could also be additional costs relating to the two ongoing employment cases.

The report detailed the lessons learnt from the review of tribunal claims in relation to policy and procedures, resources, training, investigation processes, disclosure agreements and review of HR policy and procedures. The resultant Action Plan was also considered.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 4.07 pm

Councillor B Moran (Chairman)