

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Thursday, 21st January, 2021

PRESENT

Councillor C Bulman (Chairman)
Councillor S Corcoran (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors C Browne, J Clowes, L Jeuda, D Marren, M Simon and L Wardlaw

Councillors in attendance

Councillors A Moran and J Rhodes.

Officers in attendance

Lorraine O'Donnell, Chief Executive
Jane Burns, Executive Director Corporate
Sara Barker, Head of HR
Sara Duncalf, HR Business Partner
Craig Hughes, HR Business Partner
Abigail Rushton, Senior Manager Workforce Development
Josie Griffiths, Head of Audit and Risk
Paul Davies, Employment Lawyer
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

20 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no public speakers.

21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 6 July 2020 and 22 July 2020 be approved as a correct record.

22 HR UPDATE

The Committee considered a report on key human resources and organisational development priorities.

The report provided details on the NJC pay award, the JNC pay negotiations, £95k exit payment cap, exit interviews, the Apprenticeship scheme, Attendance Management and HR performance data.

The Committee sought clarification on several issues. It was asked if the £95k payment cap would apply to any redundancies taking place at the present time and were informed that the Council had been advised by North West Employers to avoid entering into any exit cap payments until the changes affecting the local government pension scheme are agreed and the judicial reviews have taken place. At the present time no restructure plans had a situation where the payment cap would apply.

Reference was made to the low take up of exit interview when an employee leaves the Council and it was asked if this was a sign of dissatisfaction with the Council. In response it was stated that employees were encouraged to take up the offer of an exit interview, but it was not compulsory. Senior managers were reminded to offer these interviews. For those leavers not wanting to have an exit interview an on-line survey had been developed to enable them to express their thoughts and share their experiences in a confidential and anonymous manner.

In relation to the attendance management information in the report, it was asked if frequency rates and the cost of absences be included. In response it was stated that a lot of analysis was carried out on the attendance data and reported to operational management teams. Further discussion could be held on what information should be reported to the Committee in future.

It was asked if elected members could receive information in relation to new starters, leaver and retirements in the Members Bulletin. The Executive Director Corporate Services undertook to see if this would be possible.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

23 BRIGHTER FUTURE TRANSFORMATION (CULTURE) PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Committee considered an update on the work undertaken on the Brighter Future Transformation (Culture) Programme and the work planned for 2021.

The emphasis of the Brighter Future Culture Programme during 2020 had continued working towards the agreed vision for the Council's culture whilst paying a particular focus on supporting staff and promoting their wellbeing throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The Brighter Future Champions and Member Forums had continued to meet virtually during

the year and had been used to 'sense check' issues and initiative and were a source of feedback from staff and Councillors during the pandemic. A short 'staff pulse survey' had been carried out in July 2020 on staff wellbeing.

It was asked if the Brighter Future Champions could provide feedback on staff views on the move to a committee system form of governance and become involved in promoting climate change within the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted, and the Committee monitor progress of future action plans.

24 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22

The Committee considered a report on the Draft Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22.

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.

The Statement for 2021/22 followed the style and format of last year's statement. Several changes had been made to the Pay Policy since last year and these were detailed in section 6.4 of the report.

There would be some in-year changes required to be made to the Pay Policy Statement to reflect the Council's move to the committee system form of governance and the outcome of the ongoing consultations with the trade unions on pay matters. To enable this to happen approval for authority for the Monitoring Officer to make in-year changes was being sought.

Discussions were being undertaken on whether a 'green' car salary sacrifice scheme could be introduced as this would be more in line with the Council's climate change ambitions.

It was reported that the £150,000 publication figure for senior employees identified by name was in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1 be recommended to approve and publish the Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22; and
- 2 delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer to make any necessary in year amendments to the Statement.

25 HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

The Committee considered and welcomed a report which detailed the work being undertaken by the Health and Safety Team and reported the number of accidents and incidents recorded to the end of quarter 3 of 2020/21.

The Health and Safety Team had been working with colleagues in Public Health, HR and Facilities Management, and in liaison with Trade Unions representatives, to provide advice, guidance and support in response to Covid-19 to services within the Council, schools and to the alternative service delivery vehicles.

The Appendix to the report provided details of the number of accidents and incidents, including the number of RIDDOR reportable accidents, to the end of Quarter 3 of 2020/21. There had been no accidents or incidents involving the Health and Safety Executive during the year to date.

The Health and Safety Executive had allowed extensions to First Aid certificates which expired after 16 March 2020 and had given first aiders until 30 September 2020 to re-qualify. Training provision for first aid had re-commenced in Quarter 2 and conducted following Covid secure practices.

RESOLVED:

The report be noted.

26 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item pursuant to Section 100(A)4 of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended on the grounds that it involved the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 and 2 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest would not be served in publishing the information.

27 PROPOSED NEW SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The Committee received a briefing from the Chief Executive on the proposals for an interim management structure following the departure of the Executive Director People to enable the continued delivery of the Council's statutory requirements and to allow time for the development of a new structure that would ensure the delivery the Council's ambitions set out in the draft Corporate Plan and associated MTFs.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee notes and supports in principle the proposed interim management structure for the People Directorate.

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.58 pm

Councillor C Bulman (Chairman)