

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Staffing Committee**
held on Thursday, 18th October, 2012 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor D Topping (Chairman)
Councillor H Murray (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Rhoda Bailey (for Cllr J P Findlow), J Jackson, M Jones,
B Murphy and D Newton

Union Representatives

Craig Nicholson – UNISON
Olga Kokkinis – UNISON
Jonathan Shaw – UNISON
Neil Holden – GMB
Chris Millington – GMB
Anne-Marie McBlain –AEP

Officers

Kim Ryley, Interim Chief Executive
Paul Bradshaw, Head of HR and Organisational Development
Julie Davies, HR Strategy and OD Manager
Amanda Rudham, HR Policy Manager
Suzanne Antrobus, Corporate Solicitor
Paul Ridings, Corporate Health and Safety Advisor
Stephanie Bretherton, Apprentice Corporate Health and Safety Service
Rachel Graves, Democratic Services Officer

Councillors in Attendance

Councillor B Moran, Cabinet Member for Performance

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor J P Findlow and Tony Caffery,
UNISON.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Jackson declared a non-pecuniary interest that she was a
member of GMB.

All members of the Committee had received a copy of an email from an
Employee to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council expressing
their disappointment and opposition to any increment freeze.

13 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2012, 25 June 2012 and 13 July 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

15 HR UPDATE

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development, aided by the HR Strategy and OD Manager, presented a report which provided a general update on Human Resource issues, including Health & Safety, Organisational Development, HR Delivery and HR Policy and Reward.

Health and Safety

A total of 1380 accidents reports were entered onto PRIME in Quarter 1, of which 31 were RIDDOR reportable to the Health & Safety Executive. This represented a continuing downward trend in the number of reportable incidents which were occurring, quarter on quarter.

A total of 149 delegates had attended 16 Health and Safety training courses and briefings. Courses included Use of Defibrillator, Manual Handling and Tool Box Talks.

Following a visit from HSE in March 2012, the development of Route Risk Assessments in the Waste & Recycling service was a priority. The process involved the identification of hazards which drivers and loaders could encounter on all of the 580 collections rounds in the Borough. Symbols had been attached to 'Lookout' sheets for each road to highlight the hazards. Briefing sessions had been held with the Trade Union representatives to keep them involved and updated on progress.

Organisational Development

Seventy young people were currently on apprenticeship placements across the Council. The recent A Team Conference and Awards Ceremony had been a huge success. Sixteen apprentices had been nominated for the Apprentice of the Year award. The A Team had also been recognised as national finalists in the Training Journal's Best Apprenticeship Programme in the UK. The winner was expected to be announced in November.

Five new management trainees had started a two year graduate programme and had commenced their first of four, 6 month placements.

The Learning Lounge had been successfully launched and more than 800 employees had already enrolled on the on-line programmes. The on-line training complemented other forms of learning by providing a cost effective and flexible means of learning in bite size pieces.

HR Delivery

The HR Delivery Team was focusing on attendance management. A range of actions had been taken to address sickness absence across the Council. Reports highlighting employees who had met triggers within the Attendance Management Procedure have been taken to Directorate and Senior Management Teams. Absence management training was being delivered and there had been an increase in the use of case reviews involving managers, HR and Occupational Health Physicians. A range of Health and Wellbeing events had been organised to promote a healthy lifestyle and raise awareness of important health issues.

One of the measures which could be adopted to manage sickness absence and provide an alternative cost effective counselling and support service for staff would be the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme. It had been found that if employees are referred for help/advice and counselling at an earlier stage, they were far less likely to have an extended period of absence and more likely to be able to control their individual stress levels.

HR Policy and Strategy

In order to improve understanding of Equality and Diversity a mandatory half day course for managers involved in budget and policy decisions had been set up and would take place during November and early December. The aim was to equip managers with the knowledge and confidence to ensure equality of opportunity was embedded in all decision making.

The Council had appointed Comensura as a neutral vendor to manage a supply chain of a wide range of recruitment agencies. Since the introduction of the new arrangements, virtually all off contract spending had been eliminated and all new requirements for agency workers were being dealt with via the Comensura contract. The contract had resulted in reductions in agency fees by approximately £70,000 since April 2012.

16 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

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

17 ITEMS REQUESTED BY TRADE UNIONS

The Trade Union representatives raised issues in relation to the following items:

- Cheshire East Council's 3 Year Plan
- Cheshire East Council's Budget Process 2013-14
- Inclusion of Streetscape and Parking Maintenance Activities within the Highway Service Contract

18 PAY REVIEW

The Trade Union representatives made a statement on the proposal to the Committee before leaving the meeting.

The Committee considered a report which set out the considerations, issues and risks relating to a second year increment freeze.

A summary of the comments made by employees on Team Talkback was circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Chief Executive be recommended to exercise their delegated authority in relation to the increment freeze.

The meeting commenced at 2.08 pm and concluded at 5.05 pm

Councillor D Topping (Chairman)