

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2018 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chairman), Cllr Tony Jackson (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Ricky Rogers, Cllr Peter Evans (Substitute), Cllr David Halik (Substitute) and Cllr Ian Thorn (Substitute)

24 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Cllr Andy Phillips, who was substituted by Cllr David Halik
Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, who was substituted by Cllr Peter Evans
Cllr Hayley Spencer, who was substituted by Cllr Ian Thorn

25 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 March 2018.

26 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

27 Chairman's Announcements

The following announcements were made:-

- **#EPIC** The Committee noted with pleasure that the HR team had been shortlisted for two HR Excellence Awards, one for outstanding employee engagement strategy and one for most innovative deployment of HR technology. The team had been shortlisted mostly with teams from the private sector.

- **#EPIC Lecture** It was noted that an #EPIC talk would be given by Dr Ali Khavadi, Consultant Cardiologist at the Royal United Hospital, Bath on 30 May 2018 at 5.30pm at County Hall, Trowbridge entitled 'The Cardiologist's Kitchen'. The talk would explain how to improve one's health, blood pressure, cholesterol and weight through contemporary evidence-based dietary interventions.

Anyone interested in attending would be welcome but would need to register on line at epictalks.eventbrite.co.uk.

Members requested that a representative from #EPIC be invited to the next meeting to explain that team's work in more detail.

- **Staff Voices Conference** Members were informed that there was due to be held a Staff Voices Conference later that day starting at 3.00pm in the Cotswold Space in the Atrium at County Hall, Trowbridge to which Members were invited to attend in addition to officers. The Conference was being held in celebration of the National Day for Staff Networks. Staff Voices was the banner name for staff networks (BME, LGBT+ and Carers and Disability).

28 **Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present or councillors' questions.

29 **General Data Protection Regulations - GDPR**

Consideration was given to a report by the Director, HR & Organisational Development about the impact that the GDPR regulations would have on the HR & Organisational Development processes. The report also outlined the action being taken to prepare for this new legislation.

These regulations were due to come into effect on 25 May 2018 and, although they were EU regulations, the UK government had confirmed that they would form part of the UK law both pre and post Brexit.

Although the GDPR's data protection principles were similar to those under the Data Protection Act, the conditions for obtaining personal data would be stricter as follows:-

- There would be a greater focus on the legal basis for processing data.
- There would be an increased obligation to provide information to employees and job applicants about the processing of their personal data.
- Individuals would have increased rights to access their personal data.
- The processing and sharing of information would be limited to what was necessary for each purpose.

- There would be new record keeping obligations and greater transparency obligations in that employers would have to provide more information on what data they held and what they did with that data.
- Personal data should not be stored for any longer than necessary and there would be increased financial sanctions.

Although these new regulations would come into force with effect from 25 May 2018, there was still much that was unclear. The Council's Information Governance Team was leading on this and a further progress report would be brought back to this Committee in due course.

During discussion, it was stressed that all staff and also councillors were required to carry out the training modules that were available to complete on line, failure to do so would result in the removal of IT facilities.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report and that the HR & Organisational Development Team were working towards compliance.**
- (2) To note that an updated report would be provided in due course to outline any further GDPR developments in HR & Organisational Development as a result of receiving clarification on some aspects of the GDPR and Data Protection Bill being passed.**

30 **Agreement of Annual Pay Award (NJC) 2018/19**

The Committee received a report by the Director, HR & Organisational Development which provided information about the annual pay award 2018/19 which had recently been agreed by the National Joint Council (NJC). (Details of the 2018 and 2019 Payscale and Allowances are attached as an Appendix to these minutes.)

A two year pay award had been agreed nationally which would result in a pay increase of at least 2% on the majority of spinal column points but with higher increases of up to 10% at the lower end of the scale. This would result in the lowest spinal column point increasing to £8.50 per hour, which would be higher than the new national living wage of £7.83 which was implemented on 1 April 2018. From April 2019 the lower end of the pay scale would increase to at least £9.00 per hour in line with the Government's desire to see the living wage increase to £9.00 per hour by 2020.

The Committee was informed that on 1 April 2018 the freeze on incremental progression, previously agreed for a two year period, was lifted. As a consequence there were a higher than usual number of employees with headroom to progress through the grade, resulting in salary costs increasing more than normal. As a result of the new pay spine to be introduced in 2019

salary costs could increase by between 5 and 6% for council staff and 6 and 7% for school support staff over the next two years even if there were no changes to the current grading structure. If there are any changes proposed to the current grading structure in 2019 this would involve negotiation with the trade unions.

During discussion, members noted that the 2% pay increase and the payment of increments had been factored into the current year's budget but there would be some impact on the budget for the following year.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report and to request a further report later in 2018 outlining the options for consideration with the implementation of a new pay spine in April 2019.

31 **Apprenticeships Update**

A report by the Director, HR & Organisational Development was received which provided the Committee with an update on the progress made on apprenticeships within the Council's workforce since the implementation of the apprenticeship levy in May 2017. The report also outlined future plans to ensure the levy was maximised to support the development of the Council's workforce.

Members were reminded that in 2013 the Government announced a number of reforms to the national apprenticeship programme as a way of introducing more rigorous standards, being more responsive to the needs of employers and to meet the commitment of having three million apprenticeships in place by 2020. At the heart of these reforms was the aim to increase both the quantity and quality of apprenticeships.

The two elements of these reforms which would have the most impact for Wiltshire Council were the levy and the proposed public sector target.

The apprenticeship levy was charged at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's pay bill and was collected monthly by the HMRC through PAYE deductions. The Council's contribution was £470,000 for the first year and it was explained that the cost of the levy would be approximately £1M in any one year.

The public sector target was set for public sector bodies with more than 250 employees in England to employ an average of at least 2.3% of their staff as apprentices from 2017-2021. This would mean that the Council would need to have approx.106 apprentices in the workforce each year until 2021 and the schools approx.150 apprentices.

The current number of apprentices employed by Wiltshire Council was 90, of which 16 were newly recruited apprentices and 74 were existing staff who were accessing apprenticeship training to upskill and gain qualifications to support

their personal development and career progression, and also the Council's succession plans.

In addition to the 90 apprentices currently in place there were a further 8 civil engineering, 3 data analyst and 3 residential care apprenticeships pending because the apprenticeship standards had only recently become available or were outstanding.

It was noted that the current number of apprentices and the 14 pending equated to 98% of the public sector target, this meaning that the Council employed 2.2% of its staff as apprentices.

The Committee noted the plans that had been developed to further increase apprenticeships and sustain the progress so far made.

It was pointed out that there were certain categories of staff, for example planning officers, where at present it was not possible to employ apprentices because apprenticeship standards were not yet available. Members hoped that this problem could be overcome before long.

It was noted that from April 2018, employers could transfer up to 10% of their apprenticeship levy to smaller firms who did not contribute to the levy. This had been designed to allow larger employers to support their supply chains and local small and medium size enterprises. For 2018/19, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) had stated that employers could only transfer up to 10% of the levy to one employer but from 2019/20 employers would be able to transfer up to 10% to multiple employers. This would allow the Council to support the local economy and help local micro businesses and small and medium sized enterprises to grow. It was suggested that Area Boards be made aware of these new arrangements and to ask them to help in drawing this to the attention of suitable firms within their areas.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report and to request that a further report be provided in 12 months to give a further update on the progress of apprenticeships.**
- (2) To congratulate the officers on the progress made to date.**

32 **Quarterly Workforce Report: January to March 2018**

The Committee received a workforce report, excluding fire, police and school staff, for the quarter ended 31 March 2018.

It was noted that grievances had increased during this period but, compared with the five-year average, the figure for the current quarter was not significantly

elevated. This was set against the context of a downward trend over the last five years.

Members noted that staff absences had increased during the quarter and the Director stated that at least in part this was due to seasonal factors. She explained that work was being carried out by HR managers with the Waste Service to reduce levels of absence in that Service. The Director offered to bring back a report to the next meeting providing an in-depth analysis on short time absences during this period.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the Quarterly Workforce Report.**
- (2) To request the officers to prepare a report for the next meeting providing an in-depth analysis on short time absences.**

33 Date of Next Meeting

Resolved:

To note that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee was due to be held on Tuesday 24 July 2018 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

34 Urgent Items

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 11.45 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Roger Bishton, of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 713035, e-mail roger.bishton@wiltshire.gov.uk

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line (01225) 713114/713115