

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 JANUARY 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chair), Cllr David Pollitt, Cllr Tony Trotman (Substitute),
Cllr Mike Hewitt, Cllr Stuart Wheeler and Cllr Bob Jones MBE

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Glenis Ansell, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE (who was substituted by Cllr Tony Trotman) and Cllr John Smale.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 November 2016.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's announcements made at the meeting.

5 Public Participation

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

6 Equality and Diversity Update

The Committee received an updated annual equality and diversity employment monitoring report, it being noted that the Council was required to produce this information annually as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in line with the Equality Act 2010.

It was noted that during the past year work had taken place to extend the data collected by reducing the data gaps. The new data collected included religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, gender reassignment and caring responsibilities. Members of staff were being asked to complete an equalities monitoring questionnaire to provide this additional information and update the information currently held. It was pointed out that collecting this additional information was making the data more accurate and robust in terms of meeting the requirements of the PSED and would help to inform the work on the Council's people strategy. It would also assist in assessing the impact of the Council's policies and practices on different groups within the workforce and enable the Council to identify and take positive steps to address gaps. The improvement of this data was part of the Council's equality objectives.

During discussion members recognised the reluctance of some staff to complete an equalities monitoring questionnaire and it was noted that ongoing work was being carried out to explain to staff why this information was required. Members suggested that to assist in this work it might be useful to seek comparative information from other local authorities.

Resolved:

- (1) To note the contents of the report.**
- (2) To request the officers to seek information on equalities monitoring from other local authorities to include in particular the manner in which this information is collected and also the level of responses received.**

7 English Fluency Requirement in Customer Facing Roles

Consideration was given to a report which set out proposed new guidance for managers and employees in relation to all roles which were customer facing where there was a need to be able to communicate fluently in spoken English.

It was noted that with effect from 21 November 2016 the Government had introduced a requirement within the public sector for all staff in customer-facing roles to be able to communicate fluently in English.

This requirement applied to permanent staff as well as temporary workers, apprentices, agency temps, contractors and self-employed contractors.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

- (1) To approve the new Fluent English Guidance.**
- (2) To request that the Procurement Unit be asked to ensure that the need to adhere to this guidance is brought to the attention of contractors and sub-contractors as part of the procurement process.**

8 Trade Union Recognition and Facility Time Agreement Review

A report was received which outlined some proposed changes to the revised and updated Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement in respect of all council staff and support staff in maintained schools.

It was noted that this agreement which was in place between Wiltshire Council and the three recognised trade unions (UNISON, Unite and GMB) had last been formally revised in 2011.

It was noted that the following changes had taken place with the agreement of the three trade unions:

- UNISON had relinquished council accommodation and was now occupying space at its own expense on the White Horse Business Park.
- UNISON was now paying for its own photocopying, printing and postage.
- A charge would be made for making trade union deductions from payroll.
- The monthly facility time off agreement would be reduced from 80 to 60 days per month, this recognising the reducing size of the workforce and the pressure on council budgets. These 60 days would still not be backfilled and would therefore not be an additional cost on staffing budgets.
- The recording of time spent by staff on union activities would be implemented.

It was pointed out that neither Unite nor GMB currently had any specified facility time or funding but that going forward the 60 days facility time could be shared between them.

Resolved:

- (1) To approve the proposed changes to the Trade Union Recognition and Facilities Agreement.**
- (2) To review the Agreement in two years' time.**

9 **Pay Policy Statement**

The Committee received a report which set out an updated pay policy statement for the financial year 2017/2018 prior to agreement by Council and publication on the Council's website.

It was noted that under chapter 8 of the Localism Act 2011 every local authority must prepare a pay policy statement annually, this starting for the financial year 2012/2013.

It was explained that the policy had been updated to include:

- A revised introduction stating the forthcoming legislation that would impact on the Council's pay arrangements. This included gender pay gap reporting, the public sector exit payment cap and recovery of public sector exit payments.
- Information regarding the union negotiations in early 2016.
- Information regarding salary protection as a result of service redesign.
- The addition of the sleeping in allowance payable for employees required to sleep in on the premises. This increased in line with the NJC pay award and had been omitted from previous pay policy statements.
- An updated total number of council employees and the latest pay ratios.

After some discussion,

Resolved:

To approve the draft Pay Policy Statement for endorsement by Council on 21 February 2017 on the understanding that the budget figure would be reviewed and updated prior to full Council approval and subject to:-

(1) The removal of paragraph 73 of the Statement which stated:

“The Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public Sector recommends a maximum ratio of the highest remunerated post compared with the lowest remunerated post of 1:20.”

(2) The addition of an extra column in the table at paragraph 74 providing the statistical information to exclude the apprenticeship rate of pay for the previous year.

(3) The provision of additional information about apprenticeships.

10 **Delivering the Business Plan - September 2016**

The Committee received a workforce report, excluding fire, police and school staff, for the quarter ended 30 September 2016, concerning:-

- Staffing levels
- Sickness absence
- New health and safety RIDDOR related injuries
- New disciplinary, grievance and absence cases
- Voluntary staff turnover
- Employee costs
- Additional financial information
- Employee diversity

It was noted that the headcount across Wiltshire had seen a decrease of 66 employees (-1.3%) since the last quarter, with the number of employees now being 4683.

The Committee noted that sickness rates had remained at the same level as the previous quarter, 2.1 days per FTE, this being a 0.3 days lost per FTE below the benchmark for a local authority. Legal and Governance had the largest decrease over this quarter to 0.4 FTE (a decrease of -1.8 days lost per FTE).

There had also been a further decrease of 0.8 days from the previous quarter within Waste and Environment, to 4.8 days per FTE, which had been a continuing trend over the past year.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

11 **Date of Next Meeting**

Resolved:

To note that the next meeting of this Committee was scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 1 March 2017 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

12 **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.30 am)

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