

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2017 AT THE KENNET ROOM - COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

Present:

Cllr Allison Bucknell (Chair), Cllr John Smale (Vice Chairman), Cllr David Pollitt, Cllr David Jenkins, Cllr Tony Trotman (Substitute), Cllr Peter Evans (Substitute), Cllr Stuart Wheeler, Cllr Desna Allen (Substitute) and Cllr Glenis Ansell

13 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mike Hewitt (Who was substituted by Cllr Peter Evans), Cllr Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE (who was substituted by Cllr Tony Trotman) and Cllr Bob Jones MBE (who was substituted by Cllr Desna Allen).

14 Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 January 2017.

15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

16 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

- (1) **Wiltshire Council named best Council to work for in Great Britain** The Chairman was delighted to announce that Wiltshire Council had recently been named the best council in the country to work for, according to one of the fastest growing jobs and recruiting sites. The accolade came from Glassdoor, a website that held a database of millions of company reviews, salary reports, benefits reviews and interview reviews. The site compiled a list of the top councils based on reviews of current and former

employees with Wiltshire Council coming out on top, ahead of other councils such as the London Borough of Camden, Leeds City Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

- (2) UNISON Branch Secretary** Sue Anderson had held the position of UNISON Branch Secretary since Wiltshire became a unitary authority in 2009. Sue was due to leave the Council at the end of March 2017 and Mike Osment had now been elected uncontested to the position. Mike would be seconded from his current role of Youth Offending Team Worker and would be taking over the branch secretary role in April 2017.

The Committee recorded its thanks to Sue Anderson for her hard work and commitment to her role of UNISON Branch Secretary and wished her every success for her future. The Chairman offered to write to Sue Anderson conveying the Committee's thanks and best wishes and also to Mike Osment inviting him to the first meeting of this Committee, after the forthcoming Local Government Elections, to explain his role.

17 **Public Participation**

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

18 **Delivering the Business Plan - December 2016**

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

The Committee noted that the headcount across Wiltshire Council had decreased since the last quarter by 26 employees (-0.5%), with the figure now standing at 4,657.

Sickness rates had remained at a constant level of 2.1 days per FTE. It was noted that stress/depression/mental health/fatigue was the reason for the highest number of FTE days lost for long term absences (913.11 FTE days), whereas for all absences cold/flu and other infections had the highest total of FTE days lost (995.81 FTE days). Cold/flu and other infections was the top reason for absence for 9 of the 14 directorates.

The Committee was pleased to note that the number of new disciplinary cases opened in the quarter had decreased to 15, which represented a decrease of 2, there were no new grievance cases opened in the quarter.

The use of agency staff had decreased during the quarter with Wiltshire Council using the equivalent of 117 full time employees through Comensura agency.

It was pointed out that there had been a small increase in the casual wage bill (an increase of £53,507 to £484,733) which was due mainly to the use of external school improvement advisors.

Members were informed that the format of the current report template was being examined in order to provide more meaningful information to both Members and also to Managers. Members were asked to give some consideration to this and send any suggestions for improvements to the Chairman. The following initial suggestions were made:-

- Monitoring of recruitment campaigns, such as social worker and planning officer campaigns.
- Monitoring of sickness and the ability to quickly highlight any sudden changes in order to provide early intervention where necessary.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the report.

19 **Staff Survey 2016**

The Committee received a power point presentation setting out the corporate results of the Staff Survey 2016.

The headline results of the 2016 Survey were as follows:-

- Employee Engagement Index increased to 58% (from 56% in 2014)
- Fully engaged staff increased to 31.7% (from 29.5% in 2014)
- Fully disengaged staff reduced to 1.2% (from 2.1% in 2014)
- Staff survey response rate increased to 65.7% (from 60% in 2014)
- Appraisal completion rates increased to 59% (from 55% in 2014)

It was pointed out that after studying the responses and comments received the following four corporate priorities had been identified for development:-

1. Learning and development opportunities
2. Resources
3. Visibility of senior management
4. Communication

During discussion, Members recognised the need to encourage those staff who had not participated to complete the survey form in future. It was pointed out that local government benchmarks were used and Members appreciated being consulted before the survey form was finalised.

Resolved:

To note the results of the 2016 Staff Survey and the key priorities arising.

20 **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of this Committee was scheduled to be held on Wednesday 17 May 2017 at County Hall, Trowbridge, starting at 10.30am.

However, as this date was the day immediately after the Annual Meeting of the Council, when members would be appointed to this Committee, the Clerk was requested to investigate if it might be possible to bring forward the date of the next meeting to possibly late April.

(Note: Subsequent to this meeting, arrangements were made for the date of the next meeting to be brought forward to Wednesday 25 April 2017, starting at 10.30am.)

21 **Urgent Items**

The Chairman was of the opinion that the following matter should be considered as a matter of urgency because it could not wait to be considered at the next meeting.

22 **Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved:

To agree that in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting for the business specified in Minute No. 23 because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

23 **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Employer Discretions Payment of Deferred Benefits**

Consideration was given to a confidential report from the Associate Director, People & Business in which the Committee was asked to consider a request from a former employee for early release of deferred pension benefits held in the Local Government Pension Scheme on compassionate grounds.

After discussion,

Resolved:

To agree to the early release of the former employee's deferred pension benefits, as set out in the report, on compassionate grounds.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 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

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