

## Staffing Policy Committee

---

### MINUTES OF THE STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 NOVEMBER 2023 AT KENNET ROOM, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE BA14 8JN.

#### **Present:**

Cllr Stuart Wheeler (Chairman), Cllr Helen Belcher OBE, Cllr Allison Bucknell, Cllr Carole King, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Ashley O'Neill, and Cllr Simon Jacobs (Substitute)

---

#### 41 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Tamara Reay
- Councillor Ricky Rogers
- Councillor Richard Clewer, who was substituted by Councillor Simon Jacobs.

#### 42 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 July 2023 were considered. Following which, it was:

#### **Resolved:**

**The Committee approved and signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 July 2023 as a true and correct record.**

#### 43 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 44 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

#### 45 **Public Participation**

There were no statements or questions submitted.

## 46 **Employee Volunteering Scheme Policy**

Jane Tagg, Strategic Business Partner, updated the Committee on the new Employee Volunteering Scheme policy.

The background and reasons for the policy were detailed as per Paragraphs 2, 4, and 6 of the report. It was explained that the scheme would entitle employees to take one day a year (pro-rata for part-time employees), or equivalent paid time off, to volunteer for activities that supported Wiltshire communities; including environment and conservation projects for local community projects or charities, and community care activities.

It was noted that the scheme would be monitored with regard to process and employee take-up. It was highlighted that it would align the Council with other private and public sectors. Officers explained that all proposed volunteering activities would be submitted to the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) for approval, and once a selection of appropriate activities were confirmed, officers would focus on the development of a strong communications strategy.

Finally, Members were informed that the scheme would incur no additional funding or cost associations upon its introduction, save the release time of volunteers which as aforementioned, would be the equivalent of an additional day's annual leave for a full-time member of staff.

During the discussion, points included:

- Members commended the policy and expressed enthusiasm at the proposed opportunities available for Council staff.
- The possibility of expanding the scheme to allow staff further days off per year to engage with additional volunteering opportunities was queried. In response, officers noted that once the launch of the scheme had been reviewed and assessed, further discussions could be had on next steps. It was further highlighted that at present, if members of staff wished to partake in additional volunteering activities, these would be treated as part of their separate annual leave entitlement.
- Members highlighted the importance of monitoring the scheme and producing metrics to assess the level of impact in terms of which directorates and priority areas had the largest uptakes and which opportunities were accepted or declined.
- It was explained that once the new Oracle programme had launched, the Council would seek to record volunteering days and could therefore hopefully provide data on volunteering days for future analysis.
- Officers highlighted that certain departments may not be able to avail of volunteering leave as the business needs of the Council and service continuity was a priority and as such, there could be instances in which officers could not approve a requested day off.

- It was clarified that the list of key priority areas as per Paragraph 9 of the report aligned with those of the business plan and would be used as a basis for considering various volunteering opportunities.
- Members queried if volunteering activities would be limited to those only in Wiltshire or if any outside of the County would be considered due to many Wiltshire residents using cross-border services and the opportunity to support and benefit a larger populace. It was emphasised that the policy focused on benefitting Wiltshire residents specifically and therefore, although there was scope to consider activities outside of the County, there would need to be a strong and justifiable case as to how Wiltshire residents would be supported.
- It was reiterated that the scheme mirrored similar ventures in both the private and public sectors, and that the scheme allowed groups of staff to volunteer together on a project.
- Members emphasised that the wording of Paragraph 7 should be amended to specify that the scheme would cover those areas encompassed by Wiltshire Council, not Swindon borough.
- Officers explained that they were aware of a number of neighbouring Local Authorities that had also implemented similar policies, however the schemes had recently been launched and as such, it was too soon to retrieve any benchmarking information.
- Officers were thanked for their presentation and hard work in developing the policy.

At the conclusion of the discussion, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee supported the implementation of the Employee Volunteering Scheme Policy subject to minor amendments as raised during the meeting.**

**The Committee requested that an update on the delivery of the policy be brought to the Committee in 12 months' time.**

47 **Long Service Awards Policy**

Francesca Hyde, Senior Case Adviser, updated the Committee on the policy amendments for the Long Service Awards Policy.

It was explained that the policy arrangement had been in place since before the move to unitary status in 2009, with the previous Wiltshire County Council policy continuing to apply. The proposed amendments to the policy were detailed as per Paragraph 2 of the report alongside Paragraphs 6 and 7 regarding associated tax liabilities, and Paragraph 23 regarding the financial implications of the proposal.

During the discussion, points included:

- Incorporating further milestones such as 30 and 35 years of service. Officers noted that it had been explored with the Corporate Leadership Team, and they had been asked to investigate to determine if there was scope for any such recognition.
- It was clarified that when calculating long service awards, if a member of staff had transferred to Wiltshire Council from another Local Authority, any years accrued through that previous authority would not be considered within the calculation as it would only recognise Wiltshire Council service. However, this was not applicable to those members of staff who had transferred from Wiltshire County Council during the unitary merger in 2009 where it was agreed to recognise their previous service. Furthermore, if a member of staff had previously worked for Wiltshire Council, resigned, and were then re-employed at a later date, those previous years of service would not be considered within the calculation due to the break in employment.
- Paragraph 20 of the report was highlighted, and it was confirmed that the reference to the comments from the panel were more procedural queries as opposed to any specific concerns on any equalities impacts.
- It was noted that Councillors would not be eligible for any long service awards as per the policy, as it was primarily aimed towards Council staff.
- Members requested an update on the number of employees anticipated to reach 30 to 35 years of service which officers agreed could be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee supported the updates to the policy as summarised:**

- **The voucher amount awarded at 25 years' service to be increased from £150 to £250, in line with a revised published policy effective from 1 January 2024.**
- **The milestones of 15, 20, and 25 years' service to be recognised with a certificate of recognition and a badge, effective from 1 January 2024.**
- **Wiltshire Rewards to be used as the Council's long service voucher provider going forward, effective from 1 January 2024, with each directorate contributing to a central pot to cover these and other awards.**
- **Wiltshire Rewards to be used as the Council's long service voucher provider going forward, effective from 1 January 2024, with each directorate contributing to a central pot to cover these and other awards.**

## 48 Oracle Update

Barry Jordan, OD & People Change Service Manager, and Tamsin Kielb, Director of HR & OD, provided written and verbal updates to the Committee on Multi-Factor Authentication and the Acceptable Usage Policy, the launch of Oracle, and minor changes to the Expenses Policy.

### Acceptable Usage Policy: Multi-Factor Authentication Introduction

- It was explained that the policy had been updated to reflect best practice in line with the fast-paced nature of the area, and to ensure that the Council continued to employ the most robust security tools available.
- The main considerations for the Committee were outlined as per the report, with specific attention drawn to Paragraphs 6 and 8.
- It was highlighted that the policy referred to anyone accessing Wiltshire Council information and therefore Councillors, among others, would be bound by the policy's terms. Members requested that Paragraph 2a of the policy be amended to specifically note that the policy applied to Councillors and stressed the importance of informing all Councillors of the changes. Members also suggested advertising the changes on specific Councillor focussed systems and organising a detailed briefing for all Councillors through the Democratic Services, IT, and Information Governance Teams.
- It was further noted that the first cloud application to utilise Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) would be Oracle, which was due to be launched under the Evolve programme. Officers acknowledged that it was a significant adjustment to previous working practices and had therefore worked with focus groups and other members of staff to run pilots and seek feedback to understand where the pinch points were.
- Members queried what support was in place to help those people that may struggle with the changes. Officers explained that there was a step-by-step guide as part of the set-up process which should help in the first instance, but if there were any further issues then there would be contact information to signpost people to specific support staff.
- Members highlighted that it was useful to have tracked changes shown on updated policies for Members to easily see any amendments.
- In response to a request, officers agreed to substitute the word "dodgy" for "suspicious" when used throughout the policy.
- In reference to phishing and spearfishing, it was emphasised that in the interest of doubt, any suspicious emails should be forwarded to [informationgovernance@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:informationgovernance@wiltshire.gov.uk) for further investigation.
- It was acknowledged that although officers could not guarantee complete security on Council owned laptops, officers alongside the Cabinet Member with the responsibility for IT, Broadband, and Digital, reassured Members that they were satisfied with the approach that the IT and Information Governance Teams had in place.

### Launch of Oracle

- It was confirmed that Oracle was due to launch on Monday 13 November 2023 with a staggered, phased approach.
- Details were then given for the main support mechanisms available, namely:
  - Self-service guidance documents on sharepoint.
  - 171 'super users' covering all services who had been given additional training and were acting as change agents to support the transition.
  - A dedicated mailbox if people experienced particular issues.
  - Online training guides.
  - Dedicated areas in County Hall and Monkton Park where one-to-one support was available for three weeks after the initial launch.
- Members expressed enthusiasm at the launch of the system and asked how officers were engaging with those people that would be affected by the transition. It was explained that as it was a cloud-based system, and therefore reliant on internet and bandwidth capabilities, communications would be staggered in hourly blocks to mitigate any congestion. Furthermore, officers had created a series of launch videos and internal communications that would be circulated to all relevant parties to notify them of the changes and generate interest.
- It was explained that the Council ran a series of independent systems relevant to different services such as payroll, staff training, and recruitment processes. However, these different services would be consolidated into Oracle which would therefore lessen additional administration and maintenance requirements and instead provide a more holistic picture, thus supporting better decision making and data analysis.
- It was clarified that the savings gleaned from the integration of the systems would be realised over a number of years, but that it would provide a wider financial perspective in areas such as bulk buying and procurement.
- Officers reassured Members that the Evolve Team were responsible for the system itself, however officers within the Finance and HR Teams had specific roles to continuously review the system to ensure compliance and identify any areas for improvement.

### Expenses Policy Update

- It was briefly explained that there was a minor change to the Expenses Policy due to the launch of Oracle as the system allowed for expenses to be processed twice a month, instead of the current system of once a month. As such, the policy had been amended to note the change.

**Resolved:**

**The Committee approved the Acceptable Use Policy subject to amendments as raised during the meeting.**

**The Committee noted the update on Oracle and the subsequent amendment to the Expenses Policy.**

49 **DBS Policy Update**

Tamsin Kielb, Director HR & OD, presented a verbal update to the Committee on the amendment to the DBS policy (Disclosure and Barring Service).

It was confirmed that the policy had been considered at a past Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) meeting in which it was explained that a minor amendment to the policy had been made due to a missing process. Members were informed that if an applicant had lived overseas for more than 12 months in the past 10 years, officers were required to obtain a certificate of good conduct from the country that they resided in. As such, it was confirmed that the Recruitment Team would support managers in doing such when needed, and therefore the policy referred managers to that team.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee noted the update.**

50 **Workforce Analytics**

Tamsin Kielb, Director HR & OD, and Kirsty Butcher, Workforce Insight Analyst, updated the Committee on the current workforce analytics position.

Members were reminded that the previous Workforce Analyst had left the Council which had identified a lack of resilience within the team and had led to officers undertaking a subsequent staffing restructure. As such, Kirsty Butcher was introduced as the new Workforce Insight Analyst and it was explained that a Workforce Analytics report could not be drafted in time for the meeting, but it was confirmed that a report would be delivered at the next meeting of the Committee.

Officers confirmed that it was a key priority to continue replicating and developing the report to provide richer insights and assist with the development and analysis of the Employee Engagement and Wellbeing Survey. The importance of understanding the data was then emphasised as it would assist officers in making data driven decisions to support the delivery of the Council's Workforce Strategy.

The move to Oracle was raised and it was noted that it had added a further layer of complexity as to how the data was extracted, however officers were confident that there was ample support across services to assist with data extraction to form the basis of the reports.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee noted the update.**

51 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 - 11.45 am)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Ellen Ghey - Democratic Services  
Officer of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718259, e-mail  
[ellen.ghey@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:ellen.ghey@wiltshire.gov.uk)

Press enquiries to Communications, direct line 01225 713114 or email  
[communications@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:communications@wiltshire.gov.uk)